

DISLOCALISM:
TRAVEL, GLOBALIZATION, AND THE PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
ABSTRACT.....	v
INTRODUCTION.....	1
 CHAPTER	
1 GLOBALIZATION AND DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES.....	12
New World Order?	12
Dislocalism.	17
Disciplinary Practices	23
2 (IM)MIGRATION: PRODUCING A NATIONALIST LITERATURE IN THE “AGE OF GLOBALIZATION”.....	53
Survival of Nationalist Paradigms.....	53
Immigration as a Dislocalizing Concept.....	57
Dislocalist Practices in Literary Criticism.....	76
Julia Alvarez’s <i>How the García Girls Lost Their Accents</i>	77
Jessica Hagedorn’s <i>Dogeaters</i>	95
Esmeralda Santiago’s <i>When I was Puerto Rican</i> and <i>America’s Dream</i>	116
Conclusion	133
3 RE-DRAWING THE BOUNDARIES: AMERICAN TRAVEL WRITING.....	135
The End of Travel?.....	135
Robert Kaplan: “Actual” Travels and First Hand Accounts.	146
Mary Morris: Interruption of Domesticity.....	159
Paul Theroux: The Politics of Fiction.....	171
Conclusion.....	185
4 TOURISM THROUGH FOOD.....	186
The End(s) of Authenticity.....	192
Filling the Gap or Narrating the Nation	199
Fusion: <i>Food & Wine</i>	218
The End(s) of Cuisine and <i>A Cook’s Tour</i>	236
Conclusion	249

5 CONCLUSION.....	250
REFERENCES.....	257
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH	274

Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School of the University of Florida in
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This dissertation takes a critical look at how scholarship in American literature, especially ethnic, literary and cultural studies, contends with the idea of globalization. I address what it means to articulate nationally, regionally, ethnically, and racially distinctive American practices and identities in the context of globalization and Americanization. According to the conventional view, globalization has ushered in a new “global” reality that requires everyone, on pain of becoming obsolete, to catch up and adapt. In the case of literary and cultural criticism, this new “global” anxiety has produced what appear to be sweeping changes in both the underlying conceptions of, and the disciplinary approaches to, an “American” literary and cultural corpus, and has given rise to paradigms emphasizing transnational “border crossing” and “migrancy.” But are these changes as sweeping as they seem? My dissertation examines responses to globalization in genres such as American immigrant literary studies, travel writing, and tourist narratives. For instance, I look at the conjunction of literary texts by contemporary

writers such as Julia Alvarez, Jessica Hagedorn, and Paul Theroux with new genres of scholarship and pedagogy in order to uncover the way that nationalist paradigms persist in the face of globalization.

I am particularly attentive to the process whereby such genres, rather than merely responding to forces of globalization, also participate in its production—for, I argue, globalization is as much a discourse as it is a set of historical processes. I call this discourse “globalism.” I am also interested in the drive to shore up existing and traditional disciplinary boundaries within American literary studies in response to the anxieties produced by globalization. By deploying a strategy I refer to as “dislocalism,” literary authors, critics, and cultural producers both displace and consolidate their practices so that older institutional practices are not entirely displaced or rendered useless in the context of globalization. Finally, I show that in the context of globalization, American immigrant literary studies, travel writing, and tourist narratives become sites for the containment of ethnicity and diversity within U.S. borders, thus securing the U.S. as a place that is both local and global.

INTRODUCTION

I started undergraduate school with the intention of studying business and pursuing a financially lucrative career, so when a small business school in Massachusetts with an impressive job placement rate of about 95% came up with an equally impressive financial package, I didn't hesitate to accept. But after about a year or so, I found myself gravitating towards literary studies, in part because the English department seemed to be the only space within which it was possible to critique both the disciplines and the general atmosphere of college, as well as to question the very social and economic premises for studying accounting, finance, management, and so forth. But despite this openness to critique, everyone in English seemed also to be tacitly agreed that, given the tight job market, it was not in the best interest of the discipline of English or that of students that they be encouraged to study literature. So I joined a combined BA/MBA program, pursuing English as an undergraduate major and deferring business for graduate school.

Ten years ago when I commenced my studies for the MBA degree, the program was going through a rapid restructuring, moving from theoretically Keynesian-based disciplinary studies of management, marketing, finance and accounting to a more globally oriented model that was interdisciplinary, creating formations such as international business--in which courses like management theory would be taught by faculty from many different disciplines--complete with an aggressive renewal of study abroad courses. The role of the humanities as a service to business disciplines became

even more pronounced and went beyond departments such as English and modern languages with the idea of helping the students accumulate the communication and writing skills needed for entrepreneurship. The rhetoric of learning about “other” cultures and acquiring “other” languages was being vigorously emphasized in the wake of an increasingly interlinked economy. The administration asked the humanities and social science departments to provide such learning and yet at the same time kept such departments from expanding with the excuse that recruiting more humanities/social sciences students would make the college lose its identity and its niche as an appealing school for business students.

Though a few people in the English department had moved into teaching graduate courses in managerial communication or technical writing, I still had a sense that the English department was a place of critique and a refuge from business ideology. Going through the MBA program—all the while contesting assignments, refuting questions and challenging ideology--it became clear to me that I needed to seek out and stay within this refuge. So when I finally left my college for graduate study in English, I gleefully gave away or threw away my business textbooks, thinking that I would never look back. For a while, in my pursuit of English graduate degrees at larger universities, where members of English departments did not necessarily have to engage with the rhetoric of business on a daily basis, I found in courses on American literature, film, and ethnic studies a still safer refuge from within which to carry out critical inquiry--sometimes directed at corporate interests—together with like-minded people.

But when I began the work of conceiving this project a couple of years ago, it became clear to me that I could not finally leave behind thinking about the kinds of

discourse produced by the business departments. The attention to “globalization” had by now become so pervasive that not only had the business departments done the work of shifting their field imaginary but literary/cultural critics had been busy shifting their own fields in relationship to globalization as well.

Globalization has now fully emerged as a subject of many significant academic studies. Recent publications such as *Spaces of Hope* (2000) by David Harvey and *Cultures of Globalization* (1998), edited by Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi have attracted considerable attention for attempting to define the processes of globalization. These studies from Marxist scholars emphasize that globalizing forces increase the unevenness in the way capital spreads and retracts itself across the world. Writing from a position of *realpolitik*, other writers, such as Fernando Henrique Cardoso (*Charting a New Course: The Politics of Globalization and Social Transformation*, 2001), and Robert Reich (*The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for Twenty-first Century Capitalism*, 1991), present globalization as a new and inevitable condition that requires participation from everyone. Consequently they help generate the impression that in this new era older practices are becoming obsolete. They also help to produce anxiety by suggesting that entire institutions can be rendered ineffective if they do not produce work useful in the context of globalization. Such theories have made it increasingly difficult to ignore the questions of politics, economics, finance, and information technology in the “culture disciplines” such as English, history, and anthropology.

Given this turn in literary/cultural studies, my questions in this critical study become the following ones: Does the prominent position of economics and technology in the discourse of globalization necessarily mean that members of those disciplines that

understand the workings of finance capitalism, internet technology, and investment are the principal actors, or interpreters? Are those in other disciplines simply left to contend with the consequences of these economic and technological strategies? Work in cultural theory for the most part shows how globalization affects our literary and cultural texts—novels, television, films, and even our cultural lives. In this project, however, I do not so much analyze how globalization affects cultural texts, but rather examine how these texts engage with—and, in effect, participate in—theories of globalization. For I argue that, in addition to being a set of historical processes, globalization is also a discourse.

Indeed, I propose that cultural and literary theory is not necessarily—as it often sees itself—compelled to take up globalization as a subject passively but that it is actively and significantly contributing to the production of globalization as a discourse. Further, I contend that the concept of culture is just as important to the disciplines of finance and marketing as the workings of the stock market and the politics of selling products in a foreign market are becoming to cultural theory. If the inevitability of engaging with finance, corporate culture, and technology seems to be a signal of globalization, say, in the discipline of English, then the inevitability of culture is, in turn, a mark of globalization for the discipline of marketing. The first chapter of my dissertation examines the implications of (inter)disciplinary practices as literary/cultural studies turns its attention to business and corporate practices and business disciplines—specifically management—look precisely towards concepts of literature and culture—both of them doing so in order to “respond” to the call of producing “new” work in the context of globalization and thereby at the same time re-consolidate their own disciplinary practices.

If, as theories of globalization are suggesting, most nations are losing their national distinctiveness as they become Americanized, I further ask what it then means to speak of nationally distinctive American forces? Thus my study takes up such questions as how the discourse of globalization as well as the discourse of Americanization are being produced. How is globalization as a rhetorical strategy employed to argue for things such as flexible trade policies, immigration quotas, exportation of jobs, and so forth? Does globalization necessarily imply Americanization? Furthermore, if cultural theory asks how other nations participate in producing the discourse of Americanization, then is cultural theory necessarily assuming that the world is indeed becoming Americanized? I attend to these questions through examining metaphors of mobility in American literary and cultural studies in relationship to the idea globalization.

In this study I introduce a new term, “dislocalism,” which I show is a strategy that critics, authors, cultural producers employ in order to produce the rhetoric of globalization. But before I explain my usage of this term further, it is important to consider how other frequently used terms appear in conversations about globalization. Although critics have argued that globalization in some form can be said to be as old as the fifteenth century, it often refers to the changed contemporary conditions.¹ Studies of globalization have come to house discussions of contemporary politics, economics, culture, finance, technology, and so forth with an increased emphasis on the “corporatization” of various institutions. The term “global” has come to generally describe those institutions and institutional practices-- such as global corporations--that stretch beyond the idea of a bounded national space. The term transnational also functions in a similar way. “Global,” sometimes used interchangeably with the term

cosmopolitan, also describes people. In “The Vanguard of Globalization,” James Hunter and Joshua Yates write about cosmopolitan people in the U.S. context. For them the cosmopolitans are those elites that “travel the world... and see themselves as ‘global citizens’ who happen to carry an American passport” rather than as “U.S. citizens who happen to work in a global organization” (355-6). Timothy Brennan explains that in “marked contrast to the past, the term [“cosmopolitan”] has become less an analytical category than a normative projection complementing at once celebratory claims and despairing recognitions: the death of the nation-state, transculturation (rather than a merely one-sided assimilation), cultural hybridity (rather than a simplistic contrast between the foreign and the indigenous)” (*At Home in the World*, 2). Many of the terms such as transnational, cosmopolitan, global, carry the assumption that we are now living in a postnational era and are used to describe the perceived resulting changes. In addition, the usage of these terms both deploys and displaces concepts of mobility—such as travel, immigration, tourism—that seem suddenly to have become outdated, no longer wholly adequate to describe the changed conditions in which people move from one place to another. Therefore in this study I turn to those genres of literary and cultural studies that define themselves through these concepts of mobility and thus must deal with the issues that surround their own currency at the present “global” moment. In particular, I examine various genres of American literature and culture that produce a U.S. imaginary of “displacement” and “mobility” in relationship to the concept of the “global.”

These genres include immigrant literatures, travel writing, and tourist narratives. Immigrant literary studies for example, must contend with the alleged fact that, as critics

¹ See David Harvey’s *Spaces of Hope* (2000)

such as Arjun Appadurai suggest, the “U.S. is not so much a nation of nations or immigrants” any longer “but one node in a postnational network of diasporas” (“Patriotism and its Futures,” 423). Appadurai points out that “in this scenario, the hyphenated American might have to be twice hyphenated (Asian-American-Japanese, or Native-American-Seneca or Africa-American-Jamaican or Hispanic-American-Bolivian) as diasporic identities stay mobile and grow more protean. Or perhaps the sides of the hyphen will have to be reversed, and we can become a federation of diasporas (424).” In chapter two, I discuss the way in which immigrant literary studies grapples with theories that point to the insufficiency of the concept of immigration and yet at the same time attempts to preserve the genre. In chapter 3, I show how, in similar ways, travel writers lament the “end of travel” because tourism seems to be the contemporary dominant form of movement. And finally in the fourth chapter I examine how tourism responds to the pressures stemming from its maligned image by re-defining itself through food writing.

More generally, I trace the ways in which immigrant literary studies, travel writing and tourist narratives alike have begun to generate a more subtly nationalist and less boldly revisionist response to “globalization.” For, to reiterate a point made above, such critical genres, rather than merely responding to forces of globalization, are also principal agents in the production of “globalization,” as a phenomenon that is as much discursive construct as it is a set of historical processes. A second common thread that I follow throughout these chapters is the over-determining drive to preserve existing disciplinary boundaries within American literary and cultural studies in response to the anxiety of the global, to enact certain changes at the sites of knowledge production so as to fend off other, more potentially radical possibilities.

In order to analyze these two, inter-related phenomena I seek to clarify my usage of terms such as “globalization,” and “globalism” by introducing a new term, “dislocalism.” I use the term globalization to refer to the historical processes and resulting conditions that are considered to be encompassed under this term. By globalism, I refer to the discourse of globalization. Dislocalism, then, refers to a specific strategy that literary authors, critics, and cultural producers employ to displace the “local” in order to engage with the “global”—and thus to engage in a “dislocalism.” But there remains a simultaneous-investment in *remaining* localized—in adhering to a “dislocalism”—so that older institutional practices are not entirely displaced or rendered useless. American institutional and literary practices, I argue, exemplify a pattern of “dislocalism” whereby “American” identity must look increasingly to its “global” others in order to remain, “globally,” itself. Dislocalism thus differs significantly from a mere practice of dislocation that often simply connotes both spatial and conceptual displacement of older practices. Rather it refers to those practices that gesture towards dislocation precisely in order to prevent such displacements. Another term contained in dislocalism, is, obviously, “localism” itself, one that frequently appears in discussions of globalization along with its variants, “local” and “localization.” The word local, for example, has become an adjective for those practices and institutions opposing the idea of the global. Yet, in many contexts, the local seems to be inextricably linked to processes of globalization. For example, Yungxian Yan in “Managed Globalization,” writing about globalization and China, argues that “McDonalds is not a multinational company but a multilocal company, and Beijing’s McDonalds is committed to making hamburgers a part of the local culinary culture” (34-35). Paying attention to “local” patterns is important to

“global” companies. Yan uses the term localization to signify the process by which “foreign cultures” become objects of adaptation by local communities. He states that: “emerging global culture is marked by diversity rather than uniformity because local culture continues to lead to new emergent social entities, new adaptive forms” (34). In this context the nation becomes a local place or a locality in what is often called the global village—a term that among other things emphasizes the interconnectedness of the world.² A final closely related term that I want to discuss is glocal. Used in different contexts, it generally refers to idea that local places are affected by global policies. So studies of local communities in their cultural production becomes a way of measuring how the global influences them. In “Glocal Knowledges: Agency and Place in Literary Studies” Robert Eric Livingston says that understanding the “scenarios of globalization ... requires resisting the impulse to set global and local into immediate opposition. Their intertwining may be more helpfully understood by what Japanese marketing consultants have termed *dochakula*, “glocalization” (148). Livingston argues that as opposed to the terms global and local, glocal emphasizes “constant, often conflictual, working and reworking of practices” (149). While critics use various terms to attempt an understanding of the processes connected to

globalization, dislocalism names a particular strategy through which literary and cultural genres produce the *rhetoric* of globalization—a close examination of which brings to the surface the way in which these genres are under pressure to reshape and redefine themselves, at the same time ensuring that they are not entirely erased.

Although there are distinctly different ways in which dislocalism operates within the various genres, one generally noticeable trend can be described as a “turn toward

² See Jeremy Brecher and Tim Costello's *Global Village or Global Pillage* (1998)

fiction.” Raymond Williams has written that “fiction has the interesting double sense of a kind of imaginative literature and of pure (sometimes deliberately deceptive) invention” (Keywords, 134). I show that the various genres employ the idea of fiction as both as a literary genre and as something that is the opposite of “fact.” Exploring the discourse of globalization means paying attention to the kind of stories that critics and writers tell about globalization for their own ends. To cite a couple of quick examples: management theorists claim that because of globalizing forces, managing corporations has become complex and the complexity in literary fictions can help guide managers through some of the organizational complexities. Management theorists desire to capitalize on clichéd ideas of works of fiction as “timeless” so as to hold on to stability at a time when the complexities of business operations are difficult to grapple with. Meanwhile, travel writers, nervous that the planet is turning into one big tourist spot, begin to turn to travel fiction. Here I detect a trend, not so much to defend the idea that, in the age of tourism, travel still exists, but to shift attention to defending the *genre* of travel writing, suggesting that it is not an account of the new and unfamiliar--the hallmark of the supposedly factual and non-fictional genre of travel writing--that is important, but rather that it is the writer’s perspective that reproduces already familiar places as “new.” Writers not only emphasize the idea of perspective but also slide more easily out of having to be accountable for the utility supposedly “truthful” accounts of travel provide. This strategy of the “turn toward fiction” helps writers and critics both to maintain an investment in national paradigms and to preserve specific genres.

And a final clarification: although this project will interrogate cultural knowledge production in disciplines as varied as English and management as well as in popular

media, ideologically and methodologically it is positioned in literary and cultural studies—a position that, as it once enabled me to look critically at business as a career and an ideology, now allows me to explore the rhetorical aspect of globalization.

CHAPTER 1 GLOBALIZATION AND DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES

New World Order?

In his book *Secular Vocations* (1993) Bruce Robbins relates an anecdote as follows: “In the fall of 1972, when I was starting graduate school, the professor in charge of the first year colloquium asked us all what we would say if a businessman held a gun to our heads and demanded to know why society should pay for us to study literature” (84). This was met by a “painfully prolonged and embarrassed silence.... We did not seriously expect to have our brains blown out, but we were, I think more nervous than usual” (84). He goes on to relate other anecdotes about ways he is still asked to justify what he does for a living. Robbins employs these moments to suggest that questions about the legitimacy of work in the humanities are not only raised from outside the discipline but from within it as well. This scenario of the businessman with a gun assumes that the legitimacy of a business practitioner is not in question precisely because “society” perceives business work to be directly valuable and profitable. On the other hand, many perceive a literary critic’s work as unprofitable, especially if that work critiques capitalist enterprises. In addition, the anecdote implies that the relationship between those who work in the humanities and those in the business disciplines is antagonistic. The scenario invoked in 1972 becomes even more pertinent at present since it signals increased nervousness and defensiveness on the part of the humanities as corporate interest has become seemingly even more threatening and inevitable, perhaps

even total in the form of globalization. Since 1972, this antagonism may have increased. While many remain suspicious of the work of academics, humanities scholars for their part have begun to turn their attention to business as never before, in the face of globalization. Cultural critics are beginning to theorize corporate culture and pay attention to the nature of the distribution, expansion as well as contraction of finance capital across the globe. The nature of this contentious relationship between the humanities and the business disciplines, especially as they contend with the theories of globalization, raises important questions about the implications for disciplinary practices and about the production of knowledge in general.

This dissertation addresses the implications of the production of cultural knowledge as sites of knowledge production engage with the processes and theories of globalization. It will focus on American travel and immigrant literatures, as well as on tourist and corporate practices in order to think about how they produce and disseminate cultural knowledge. Although this project will interrogate knowledge production in disciplines as varied as English and management, it is ideologically and methodologically positioned in literary and cultural studies while borrowing anthropological theory and tools. Globalization in addition to being a set of material conditions, however that is defined, it is also a discourse.

I will differentiate between the material conditions and processes of *globalization* as such and the discourse of globalization produced by members of institutions who present their practices to be merely responding to the conditions of globalization. This discourse I shall refer to as *globalism*. One of the primary purposes of this project is to investigate how various institutional practices produce globalism. I will refer to the

particular nature of globalism in each of the sites to be explored and analyzed as *dislocalism*. In part, dislocalism is a process whereby the production of globalism entails that those associated with various sites of knowledge production displace their practices in order to remain viable in the new context. I shall return to dislocalism but first it is worthwhile to start by tracing some of the common aspects of the processes of globalization as outlined by critical theory.

Many critics suggest that globalization, with its emphasis on internationalization of business, is hardly new. In *Spaces of Hope* (2000), David Harvey argues that globalization has been “around in some form or other for a very long time—at least as far back as 1492 if not before” (21). He goes on to show how “globalization” has gained emphasis as a preferred term of presumed new world order.

‘Globalization’ seems first to have acquired its prominence as American Express advertised the global reach of its credit card in the mid-1970s. The term then spread like wildfire in the financial and business press, mainly as legitimization for deregulation of financial markets. It then helped make the diminution in state powers to regulate capital flows seem inevitable and became an extraordinarily powerful political tool in the disempowerment of national and working-class movements and trade union power (labor discipline and fiscal austerity—often imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank—became essential to achieving internal competitiveness). And by the mid 1980s it helped create a heady atmosphere of entrepreneurial optimism around the theme of the liberation of markets from state control... It helped make it seem as if we were entering upon a new era... and thereby became a part of that package of concepts that distinguished between then and now in terms of political possibilities. (13)

Despite the acknowledgement that globalization may not represent an entirely new era, and that it is certainly a term that has been ideologically useful to corporate interests, many theorists agree that forces of globalization at present have multiplied tremendously

and are producing new conditions that warrant a closer look. For example, Fredric Jameson, focusing on the financial aspects of globalization in *The Cultural Turn* (1998), concedes that the internationalization of finance itself is not new, but the speed with which capital seeks to knock down political barriers has increased tremendously and is creating new conditions. Harvey makes a similar point.

While everyone will concede that changes have occurred, what really needs to be debated is whether these qualitative changes are good enough and synergistic enough when taken together to put us in a qualitatively new era of capitalistic development demanding a radical revision of our theoretical concepts and our political apparatus. (67-68)

He goes on to say that the “answer is a qualified yes,” qualified because he thinks that this change has occurred without “any fundamental revolution in the mode of production and its associated social relations.” (68).

For Harvey this change in conditions requires a reformulation of theory and politics. But he suggests that this reformulation has to take place carefully because globalization has been accepted widely with little question. He says that the fact that many of us took “the concept on board so uncritically in the 1980s and 1990s” and allowed

it to displace the far more politically charged concepts of imperialism and neocolonialism, should give us pause. It made us weak opponents of the politics of globalization particularly as these became more and more central to everything that the U.S. foreign policy was trying to achieve. The only politics left was a politics of conserving and in some instances downright conservative resistance. (13)

A significant aspect of globalization is the unevenness produced by the way in which capital both spreads and retracts across the world. Harvey shows how “uneven

geographical development” of social infrastructures is reproduced through the newer relations of capital that (re)produces its social as well as its physical environment. For Harvey this is the crucial condition of globalization. Critics point to such unevenness and suggest that the processes of globalization produce the sort of conditions in which the disparity between various global constituents becomes exaggerated. For instance Jameson tentatively defines globalization as “an untotalizable totality which intensifies binary relations between its parts—mostly nations, but also regions and groups...” (“Preface,” *Cultures of Globalization*, p. xii). Also, in “‘Globalization,’ Culture, and the University,” Masao Miyoshi argues that globalizing forces continue to exacerbate the binary division between the rich and the poor. Alternatively, critics such as Arjun Appadurai stress that globalization has also produced new possibilities. He uses the term deterritorialization to describe both the unevenness and the possibilities created by the processes of globalization. In *Modernity at Large* (1996) Appadurai notes that “the complexity of the current global economy has to do with certain fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture, and politics that we have only begun to theorize” (33). He further says that

Deterritorialization, in general, is one of the central forces of the modern world because it brings laboring populations into the lower class sectors and spaces of relatively wealthy societies, while sometimes creating exaggerated and intensified senses of criticism or attachment to politics in the home state. Deterritorialization is now “at the core of a variety of global fundamentalisms, including Islamic and Hindu fundamentalism. At the same time, deterritorialization creates new markets for film companies, art impresarios, and travel agencies, which thrive on the need of the deterritorialized population for contact with its homeland. It is in the fertile ground of deterritorialization in which money, commodities, and persons are involved in ceaselessly chasing each other around the world... (37-38)

But whether emphasizing the disparities of conditions of unevenness or the universal possibilities, the discourse of globalization—that is, “globalism”—seems to require us to engage and respond to it as an urgent reality or it threatens to leave us behind. In *At Home in the World* (1997), Timothy Brennan shows that the presence of a public discourse about the inevitability of globalization gives the impression that globalization is or should be everyone’s concern. Brennan further asserts that books such as *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for Twenty-first Century Capitalism* (Robert Reich 1991) that advise the general American reading public about how to survive and become successful in a globalized economy leave “those who make a living with ideas and images little choice but to become either irrelevant or (in Reich’s coercive sense) global” (162).¹ The production of knowledge must itself, it appears, be held accountable for theories—or, perhaps more accurately, discourses—of globalism. Indeed, globalism becomes a kind of overarching narrative in which the production of knowledge is required to take part.

Dislocalism

Because writers such as Reich present globalization as a new and inevitable condition that requires participation from everyone, they help generate the impression that in this new era older practices are becoming obsolete. As Evan Watkins explains in *Throwaways* (1993), people and practices don’t just become obsolete with the advent of “new” technologies, economic or cultural conditions, but rather the concept of the

¹ Scholarship on globalization shows that however incomplete the processes of globalization may be, they are nevertheless inevitable and coercive. See for example, Fernando Henrique Cardoso’s *Charting a New Course: The Politics of Globalization and Social Transformation* (2001) as well as *Best Practices in International Business* (2001) by Michael R. Czinkota and Ilkka A. Ronkainen.

“obsolete” is created and needed by the discourse of the “new.” He maintains that “obsolescence involves conditions of both cultural and economic production in the present, not what has survived uselessly” (7). Watkins’ term “throwaways” describes the coding of “isolated groups of population” presented as those “who haven’t moved with the times” (3). Narratives of globalism are good examples of the dynamic described by Watkins, invested in this concept of the new and producing their own version of obsolescence by suggesting that entire institutions can be rendered ineffective if they do not produce work useful in the context of globalization. All of the sites of knowledge production that I have chosen to examine construct an imaginary of displacement in response to the perceived conditions of globalization and in turn produce globalism. I will refer to this process as dislocalism, whereby the sites of knowledge production create the very thing to which they think they are responding. Therefore, globalism leads us to think that in order to produce work more suited for globalization, institutional practices must change or displace themselves. This self-displacement means that those associated with the sites of knowledge production such as corporate practitioners, travel writers, and tourists must redraw boundaries in such a way as to affect their own production of knowledge. However, the redrawing of the boundaries at the same time helps to keep such discourses, practices, and institutions intact. Dislocalism then refers both to a displacement of the “local” in order to engage with the “global”—a “DISlocalism”—and an investment in remaining localized—a ‘disLOCALISM’—so that the older institutional practices are not entirely displaced or rendered useless. An investment in remaining localized and yet still generating viable knowledge in the context of globalization also produces globalism as a rhetorical strategy with which to argue for other issues such as

shifts in immigration quotas and policies, the changing of academic curricula, and the relocation of corporations. For example, members of a corporation arguing for relocation of production because they want to increase profits cite “globalization” as kind of shorthand for a variety of economic and political conditions that require a shift in production.

In other words, dislocalism in all of these sites and has two significant aspects: 1) institutional practices produce the discourse of globalization (globalism) and aid in constructing its “theories” (however unintentionally) while appearing to merely respond to a set of inevitable conditions; 2) members of institutions perceive that they must displace their practices, both so as to produce viable information and work suitable for the “era” of globalization and also to buttress the institutions themselves against too radical a displacement. This dual aspect of dislocalism is produced at various levels and takes variable shapes in different institutions and practices. It will be my purpose here to examine closely some of these “dislocalized” configurations.

To illustrate more concretely what I mean by dislocalism, let us observe briefly how Robert D. Kaplan’s travel narrative *The Ends of the Earth* (1996) exemplifies this term. Kaplan undertakes a journey that begins in Africa and ends in Asia in part to document how the processes of globalization affect different parts of the world. Kaplan’s work updates the older travel narratives such as Paul Bowles’ *The Sheltering Sky* (1949). Bowles’s Africa is an exotic and a faraway place, one in which the realities of New York seem at least on the surface far removed. In contrast, Kaplan’s Africa--and indeed the whole “globalized” world-- is a place traveled to for its similarities to the U.S.; Kaplan’s motivation for travel is to gain a first hand account of how globalization is

affecting people around the world. In a sense, he produces a narrative that confirms what we already know: that as opposed to the Tiger economies of Asia, Africa is not a significant participant in the networks of globalization. However, he does not consider the possibility that the networks of globalization have helped create present economic and political conditions in Africa. Indeed, Kaplan does not simply observe the conditions of globalization. He actually produces a document that is to become part of the evidence used in making policy decisions that work effectively to discount, for purposes of official “globalization,” large parts of Africa. The sort of dislocalism at work in Kaplan’s book makes a case for travel and travel narrative by suggesting that travel is necessary to see how the policies are working, yet, at the same time, produces information that already keeps with current ‘policy’ thinking. In fact through his travel and first hand accounts, Kaplan lends credibility to what the policy makers already think. That is, the very metaphors of mobility and travel become ways to uphold the ideologies of the policy makers. Moreover, by suggesting that travel can help produce viable information about the workings of globalization, Kaplan appears to update the travel narrative for the age of globalization, thus helping to preserve the genre of travel writing as a whole. As I will show, the production of globalism in the form of dislocalism varies significantly within different institutional practices. My primary focus here will be on American institutional and literary practices because they approach American nationalism in a dislocalized way.

American Nationalism

The term globalization invokes images of a borderless world and implies that corporate forces are becoming increasingly more powerful than political or national procedures. This debate is an important one in the theories of globalization. Appadurai

for example, speculates that nationalism might be on its “last legs” (Modernity at Large, 3). Even if national borders haven’t disappeared, the image of a borderless world necessarily prompts us to re-think our national affiliation and status. American nationalism becomes particularly complicated with respect to globalization.

While questions such as who are “Americans” and what is “America” have never been simple, in *Imagined Communities* (1983), Benedict Anderson has already shown us the problems with designating the term “America” for the United States. He argues that the geographical closeness between the centers of the original thirteen colonies along with their tight-knit connections by print and commerce allowed the U.S. to establish a version of nationalism different from that of South America. This also helped the U.S. to “eventually [succeed] in appropriating the title of ‘Americans’” (64). Anderson further shows that despite the tight connections between the centers, the “non-absorption” of Canada along with the “rapid expansion of the western frontier” serve as reminders that nationalism in the U.S. or what can be termed as the project of “Americanization” was never complete (64). Although the usage of the term “American” without a qualifier, for the United States can be seen as ethnocentric, the flexibility of the term “American” is ironically appropriate in the context of globalization; theorists such as Harvey and Appadurai respond to the perception that globalization can be synonymous with Americanization.

Although Harvey acknowledges that the U.S. “would not have been able to impose the forms of globalization that have come down to us without abundant support from a wide variety of quarters and places,” he nevertheless maintains that “globalization is undoubtedly the outcome of a geopolitical crusade waged largely by the U.S.” (*Spaces*

of *Hope* 69, 68). On the other hand, Appadurai observes that arguments often fail to consider “that at least as rapidly as forces from various metropolises are brought into new societies they tend to become indigenized in one way or another” (32). Despite this indigenization of metropolitan forces, they do however originate in the various metropolises, with the United States as one of the prominent places of origin. If theories of globalization are suggesting that most countries are losing their distinctive national character as they become Americanized, then what does it mean to speak of nationally/regionally/ethnically/racially distinctive *American* cultures, practices, identities, and so forth? The elasticity of the term “American” and/or “Americanization” is effective precisely because it helps us recognize that Americanization, much like the project of nationalism as described by Anderson is uneven and never complete yet retains a distinctly U.S. character. The center/periphery model of capital relations becomes complicated along with the question of American nationalism because the line between center and periphery can be drawn just as easily between various parts of New York as it can be drawn between the United States and sub-Saharan African countries. Therefore the question of American nationalism as it relates to global inequities and unevenness of capital relations is complex. Within this framework, I will examine how globalization and Americanization work as rhetorical strategies. To what extent is the concept of globalization being used to argue for American capital investment and corporate presence in other countries? In particular, I want to study how cultural and literary texts produce and reproduce American-ness as a dislocalized concept. Nationalism and national identity are important in each of the sites of knowledge production and figure prominently in fueling a dislocalized effect. Texts that construct an imaginary of

displacement offer us a way to negotiate between the concept of the “American” and the concept of the “global.” For example, I will investigate how American travel writing might be read as a self-displacement or dislocalism necessary in order to maintain American identity.

The rest of this chapter concentrates on how academic cultural knowledge production participates in dislocalism as it becomes displaced from its traditional disciplinary home(s). Disciplinary dislocalism takes a very different shape than the one we see in Robert Kaplan’s travel narrative. I will address how disciplines refashion themselves in response to globalization and how they participate in the production of globalism.

Disciplinary Practices

Fredric Jameson points to the interdisciplinary nature of globalization studies by suggesting that globalization “seems to concern politics and economics in immediate ways, but just as immediately culture and sociology, not to speak of information and the media, ecology or consumerism and daily life” (Preface, *Culture of Globalization* xi). Given this interdisciplinary focus, what are the implications for/of disciplinary practices as they produce cultural knowledge while contending with theories of globalization?

In thinking about globalization, cultural theorists including Miyoshi, Jameson, and Appadurai tend to frame the significance of corporate world and its “culture” by emphasizing the importance of economics and finance, as well as technology. Thus the “culture disciplines” such as English, anthropology, sociology, and more recently cultural studies that have traditionally produced knowledge about cultural matters must contend with the production of knowledge in the business disciplines such as finance,

management, and marketing.² For several reasons, cultural studies practitioners have taken up the charge to work on globalization and corporate culture. As Patrick Brantlinger suggests in *Crusoe's Footprints* (1990) cultural studies arose as a way to extend the tools of literary analysis to cultural texts other than literature, and continues to provide a home for various kinds of non-literature projects. Simon During's description of the discipline in the introduction to *The Cultural Studies Reader* (1993), is also useful. During illustrates that the discipline includes literary analysis, ethnographic methods, and social explanations. Thus works on corporate culture that combine the above elements such as *No Sweat: Fashion, Free Trade and the Rights of Garment Workers* (Andrew Ross 1997), and *Global Village or Global Pillage: Economic Reconstruction from the Bottom Up* (Jeremy Brecher and Jim Costello 1994) are likely to show up on cultural studies reading lists. More importantly, the field has its origins in Marxist theory, and thus provides a fitting place from which to critique dominant narratives of globalization. As Brantlinger describes it, this trend toward cultural studies "springs from a rejuvenated Marxist literary theory, paradoxically more flourishing in the neoconservative eighties [and, I would add, the nineties] than it was in the radical sixties" (22). According to Brantlinger, "Marxist theory flourishes because it is the one tradition in which the relations between literature and society have been vigorously and continuously thought" (22). Ideological critiques of dominant cultural productions such as advertising, music, films with emphasis on social and cultural explanations have not only worked to blur the

² Julie Thompson Klein describes the production of knowledge along disciplinary boundaries as a complicated matter. In *Crossing Boundaries: Knowledge, Disciplinarity and Interdisciplinarity* (1996), she suggests that charges against disciplines for claiming strict boundaries, for not examining their own racism and sexism, for excluding certain subject matters, and so forth have led to the formation of fields such as cultural studies. Cultural studies, also subject to disciplinary charges such as lack of rigor and misappropriation of contexts, has employed interdisciplinary methods to produce cultural knowledge.

distinctions between high and low cultures but have also helped to make way for studies on corporations.

In a reversal of the pattern in the humanities, the business disciplines are engaging with globalization by paying attention to literary and cultural subjects. For example, whereas the discipline of cultural studies wants to understand the ways in which firms sell their products in order to examine cultural situations, the discipline of marketing wants to understand cultural situations so experts can sell products more effectively. In this curious mirroring we have a significant case of disciplinary dislocalism.

True, this is not a simple swapping of subject matter; the relationship is highly uneven. Interdisciplinary practices across fields such as English, anthropology and cultural studies obviously have significantly different ideological ends than do the practices in disciplines such as finance, marketing, and management. The origin of cultural studies in Marxist theory seems to place it in outright opposition to the business disciplines. These fields are not only ideologically different but have been and are antagonistically related to one another.

I am not suggesting that antagonistic disciplines are now forced into a relationship that did not exist earlier. The culture disciplines have always had to contend with the conditions laid down by business. To cite the most obvious cases: the production and marketing of books have been significantly consequential to the ways in which cultural knowledge itself has been disseminated. Decisions, such as what to study, how to package ideas, and what kinds of texts are assigned in a given course, are influenced by the economics of book production. In addition to ideological differences, there is inequity

in the financial compensation for members of the different disciplines. The business disciplines have traditionally enjoyed higher salaries, more prestige, and additional funding for projects as opposed to those in the humanities. These disparate and unequal conditions have continued despite the fact that corporations as well as the business academics have always had to contend with cultural issues of relevance to them in order to produce successful corporate strategies.

Nevertheless, so far there has not been a history of scholars in these disciplines studying each other's subjects or consulting each other's scholarship. Later I will show how globalization has opened a space for this sort of an exchange. But it seems plausible to speculate that, if not globalization per se, globalism is surely at work in these disciplines, dislocalizing the subject matters of both in a way that permits them to answer to the call of globalization while still remaining intact and distinct.

The following questions become crucial at this point: What are the implications for/of disciplinary practices as the production of cultural knowledge becomes displaced from its (inter)disciplinary homes? What does it mean when literary and cultural critics think that the subject of globalization is and ought to be business, while business theorists think it is and ought be cultural matters? Examination of this relationship in greater detail will allow us to see that cultural theory is not simply responding to the forces of globalization but is indeed contributing to its discourse in significant ways.

Cultural theorists perceive business practitioners as producers of the theories of globalization. For example, Giles Gunn in his introduction to the PMLA volume on *Globalizing Literary Studies* (2001) observes as his point of departure that globalization

conjures up in many minds a spectacle of instantaneous electronic financial transfers, the depredations of free-market capitalism, the

homogenization of culture, and the expansion of Western, by which is meant American political hegemony. (19)

Gunn's claim that finance, free-market capitalism, and so forth signals globalization for many perhaps ought to be specified as that which signals globalization for cultural critics. In part, the nature of scholarship on globalization emphasizes two major points: 1) cultural theory must respond to the processes of globalization, and 2) it must pay attention to corporate and business issues.

Critics must first accept globalization as a significant fact before they can respond to its consequences. As Timothy Brennan says "the ethos of globality has become remarkably widespread in cultural theory, and almost completely unchallenged..." and "it is not the province of cultural conservatives alone seeking to establish United States as a place of emergence of universal ideals to which everyone must adhere but that cultural theory is deeply invested in globalism as well" (*At Home in the World*, 6-7). This widespread acceptance of globalization has produced scholarship that primarily shows the effects of globalization on literary and cultural texts, along with the implications of these effects. For example, Gunn argues that one of the important objectives for the *PMLA* volume is to address how processes of globalization have influenced "inherited notions not only of the literary and the aesthetic but also of the cultural and the historical" (19). Gunn articulates crucial questions for scholarship in literary and cultural studies: "What impact have [globalizing forces] had on the reconceptualization of literature's relationship with other expressive media, such as film, photography, television, and the Internet, and with pursuits like journalism and scholarship?" (19). He further reports that the *PMLA* editorial board, in working on this special issue, was not as much interested in

demonstrating *how* literary studies were indeed becoming globalized—but *what* that may mean or amount to (18). He suggests the latter question is more important because there is no doubt that the globalizing of literary studies is indeed taking place. Consider his claims: “who can seriously deny, for example, that academic specialties have become more nationally borderless of late, that the territories of knowledge can no longer be construed as geographically discrete.” The central questions here imagine literary study as something that has to change because of the processes of globalization. Absent is any discussion of how literary and cultural texts/theory might produce globalism.

A parenthetical remark by Gunn in the same passage is crucial, and indicates that there is a possible danger in engaging with the scholarship on globalization. Gunn claims, “such an exploration may simply re-enforce the developments it is attempting to examine and assess (thinking ‘global’ is already to submit to at least some of the regimes of globalization)” (18). The tone of the parenthetical statement suggests that literary critics do not want to participate in furthering the processes of globalization. Indeed one of the objectives of scholarship in cultural studies seems to be to perhaps find ways to resist some of these processes. But as Gunn suggests there are possible dangers with such analyses because by mere engagement critics may be submitting to the very regimes from which they are trying to distance themselves. However, if critics do not do the work of determining how or if they might advance the processes of globalization (however unintentionally), the possibility of opposing or resisting globalizing forces would be closed.

As opposed to cultural critics, the scholars in business disciplines present their studies as having a closer relationship with the kind of knowledge and skills needed to perform specific jobs outside of academic scholarship. It is evident from Bruce

Robbins' anecdote about his graduate classroom that general public perceives disciplines such as English removed from practicality and obliges its members to defend what they do for a living. While the business scholars may not exactly produce the theories that are needed and/or employed by corporate workplaces both in and outside the academy, their work is ideologically aligned closely with corporations and generally perceived by many to produce knowledge that enables corporations to function. It is thus that the image of a businessman with a gun evokes defensiveness among those engaged with cultural theory and who see their own work, opposed to corporate practices, as a losing battle. For example, Brennan advises cultural scholars to study corporations because the knowledge produced by and for corporations is employed for important decision-making. He argues that these decisions are ultimately more powerful than the ideas produced by cultural theory. He also advocates examining work for a general audience such as Robert Reich's book, *The Work of Nations* because corporate decision-makers employ the ideas present in them.

I would argue that we need to examine the production of knowledge in corporations and business disciplines not only because they have power, but also because a kind of space is beginning to emerge in which the business and culture disciplines study each *other's* objects in order to present *themselves* as engaged with the theories of globalization. With respect to business, I will focus primarily on management theory and practice because in this particular disciplinary formation we see the production of globalism that invokes culture as a central category for such things as the pursuit of market share and the managing of a diverse work place. This phenomenon appears to

mirror, inversely, the way in which cultural theorists (for example, Harvey, Jameson, Appadurai) are starting to think about issues of finance and corporate management. I will begin by tracing how attention to culture and literature has become significant in both management curricula and theory. I will then show that in this vital shift, management theorists are not only conducting their own studies on cultural issues but have also started to consult the scholarship in cultural studies, English and anthropology.³

Business disciplines have begun to recognize the value of cultural capital in corporations. As a result, many academic institutions offer a combined five-year degree in Bachelor of Arts and Masters' in business programs. Such BA/MBA programs have sprung up in colleges and universities across the country including Rutgers University, Clark University, SUNY-Albany, New York University, and many more. Brochures that market these degrees emphasize that they provide a kind of education different from the traditional business curricula. For example, the description of the program at NYU indicates a need for the kind of skills acquired through a Bachelor of Arts. The university catalogue states:

Within the corporate world, the MBA is the preferred degree for positions at both the entry and executive levels. However, a growing number of executives feel that today's complex corporate scene requires skills that are not part of the MBA curriculum: solid writing proficiency, the ability to think analytically, the skill to understand concepts and communicate them effectively and with imagination. A good liberal arts program develops these abilities almost as a matter of routine. (*Combined BA/MBA Degree, NYU*)

³ For example, Mary Jo Hatch's work in management theory--*Organization Theory: Modern, Symbolic, and Postmodern Perspectives* (1997)--draws upon work of such cultural theorists as James Clifford, Jacques Derrida, Clifford Geertz, Michel Foucault, Gerald Graff and many more. Similarly, Jay D. White's book *Taking Language Seriously: The Narrative Foundations of Public Administration Research* (1999) employs the work of Jean Francois Lyotard, Fredric Jameson, Jacques Derrida, and Jacques Lacan among others.

It is evident that these combined degrees are fulfilling corporate demand for both cultural capital and skills in which the individual worker is the site of accumulation: writing, analysis, and communication. In addition, a skill such as foreign language ability, or an understanding of the cultural patterns of other nations, increases the chances of the individual to secure employment at high wages with transnational corporations. But an employee versed in a broad liberal arts education combined with a focused business training is not necessarily changing the shape of corporate practices. Rather, the student is expected to use liberal arts skills without any political content to advance corporate strategies as a management practitioner. The structure in which students study liberal arts as undergraduates and business as graduate students tacitly considers liberal arts to be amenable to the service of business. This structure also keeps the study of liberal arts separate from that of business. Any one person may have both degrees but the study of cultural and business texts has remained each in its own respective disciplines.

Yet the corporate need for workers with a liberal arts education would seem to suggest that there is some sort of a meeting point between ideologically different disciplines, however uneven it may be. This meeting point becomes evident in the description of a course in anthropology at Cornell University entitled *Cultural Studies of International Financial Markets*. The description reads as follows:

This course considers international financial markets from an ethnographic perspective. Drawing mainly upon case studies of financial markets in East Asia and the United States, the course seeks to understand market participants' conceptions of the risk involved in decisions ranging from investment to their own career capitalism choices. In so doing, the course aims at a critical understanding of the culture of global and of markets as sites for the production of knowledge and personhood.
(*Topics in Anthropology, Cornell U.*)

This course responds to the perception that cultural theorists must pay attention to finance and to the “production of knowledge” that takes place in financial markets. Finance is not quite the staple subject of anthropology but the course is symptomatic of a particular shift that has started to occur and that brings the cultural studies into an unlikely relationship with the business disciplines. Now let us consider in what particular ways the presence of globalization theories may be marked in a management course. The description of a course entitled “Globalization, Culture, and Management: Managing Across Cultures” offered at the Harvard Business School reads as follows:

The liberalization of markets around the world has created new opportunities and challenges for managers everywhere. Increasingly, they must develop effective working relationships with people of diverse cultural backgrounds. Often they must decide whether principles, practices, and strategies that make sense in one cultural context are equally suitable for another. As they build organizations that span the globe, they must take into account a complex set of cultural variables that shape the attitudes and expectations of their varied constituencies. (*Elective Curriculum MBA Courses 2001-02, Harvard U.*)

Very different notions of culture are operant in these two courses. For the anthropology course, finance is itself a culture, while for the business course culture is vital to but remains outside “markets.” Yet a common belief in a globalized world—that is, a shared globalism—brings the two disciplines into a kind of blind, overlapping, and mutual dislocalism that permits both to appear to adapt to globalization while remaining essentially intact as separate disciplines.

The course at the Harvard Business School described above seeks to study “Latin American, Hindu-Buddhist, Japanese, Chinese, Russian, Islamic, and African cultures” as

if culture were a lens through which to “take a global perspective” (*Elective Curriculum MBA Courses 2001-02, Harvard U.*). One of the goals for the course is to examine the “difficult choices for managers whose activities span many cultures” and to eventually “explore the possibility of a transcultural model of corporate excellence” (*Elective Curriculum MBA Courses 2001-02, Harvard U.*). Thus there is an asymmetrical relationship between cultural studies and management because a shift in subject matters in management hasn’t led to the study of cultural forms but only to their use for developing corporate strategies. This course is also symptomatic of the fact that it is not only the culture disciplines that represent globalization as a coercive force making it urgent to study corporations but that the business disciplines, though they draw different conclusions, also feel that coercion. The production of cultural knowledge becomes dislocalized in management theory partially because it produces a discourse about a new world order in which culture may be important but only insofar as it replicates older forms of knowledge potentially useful to management in the furthering of corporate interests. Globalism, whether in cultural theory, management theory, or corporate practices relies upon the notion of external pressure to convey the inevitability of globalization. Practitioners of management theory employ the idea of culture to produce a globalism that points to this inevitability.

Of course, management theory and practice have had a long history of addressing cultural issues when they are relevant to corporations, for example, in the area of personnel relations. Affirmative action policies as well as fear of lawsuits over discrimination have led firms to institute diversity initiatives and sensitivity training aimed at broadening the perspectives of their employees and giving the appearance, at

least, of a diverse workplace. Also, as I have suggested earlier, much has been written about the need to understand the cultural patterns of existing and potential customers of these corporations. An increasing number of studies related to cultural issues have appeared as more and more firms search for production sites and markets outside of the United States. In his book, *Selling Globalization: The Myth of the Global Economy* (1998), Michael Veseth points out that “international marketing textbooks are filled with studies of global strategies defeated by language, culture, or local practice” (53). These cases of international failure have led management theorists to think that it is not simply enough to have knowledge about the cultural patterns of the people in their market. Theorists are realizing that management practitioners have to change the way they think.

Tom Peters begins his book *The Circle of Innovation* (1997) with quotes from CEOs who claim that corporate practices must change to meet the needs of a rapidly emerging new era. Lew Platt, Chairman and CEO of Hewlett Packard, declares: “Whatever made you successful in the past won't in the future.” Another quote from Peter Georgescu, chairman and CEO of Young & Rubicam claims: “It’s the end of the world as we know it.” With further declarations such as “distance is dead” and “destruction is cool,” *The Circle of Innovation* joins a long list of books on globalization that pronounce the emergence of a new world order and the death of an old one. Similar to other management theorists, Peters employs literature and culture to think about this new world order. In another book, *Liberation Management* (1992), Peters claims “the richness of life, which we accept as private selves and when we turn to novels or poetry, seems abandoned at the front door of the business or public agency establishment” (375). He urges business practitioners to adopt novels and poetry as pedagogical tools. He

implies that the “richness of life” (or cultural matters) seems at once necessary and difficult for members of corporations to understand because thus far these issues have been “abandoned at the front door.” Therefore, business practitioners are not only looking for help from literary fiction but also from literary and cultural theory to solve administrative problems.

In “Knowledge Development: Views from Postpositivism, Poststructuralism, and Postmodernism,” Jay D. White employs the works of theorists such as Fredric Jameson, Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, and Jean Francois Lyotard among others to think about the “role of public administration in society” and to explain “local interconnected problems” in administration (171).⁴ He argues: “the narratives that guide public administration should be considered in light of postmodernism” (173). He further says that because postmodernists deny the possibility of grand narratives “problemsolving in the postmodern era will proceed incrementally as small problems are addressed one at a time using local knowledge” (174). For White, postmodern theories help identify and solve problems such as those resulting from “job dissatisfaction, or low organizational commitment, or job stress, or work overload, or occupational burnout” in order “to preserve a greater sense of public administration as a whole” (175). Specifically, White draws upon Jameson’s idea of pastiche. He writes:

[Jameson] argues that Westerners have lost their ability to deal with the present or the future. He calls this “pastiche,” meaning the imitation of dead styles. One example he uses is the Western fascination with nostalgia film, suggesting that only the past is meaningful... His second argument starts with Lacan’s definition of schizophrenia as the inability to engage fully in speech and

⁴ Public administration and management is a branch of management that studies organizations and those businesses that are defined as statutory agencies such as transportation, housing, agriculture, and quasi-government enterprises. For more information on public administration and management see *Organization Theory for Public Administration* (1986) by Michael M. Harmon and Richard T Mayer.

language... One corrective for the problems of pastiche and schizophrenia is the willingness to engage in telling stories about the past, the present, the future. (171)

White claims that storytelling is an effective solution to administrative problems primarily because as stories, problems become open to interpretation. Interpretation with an emphasis on different points of view seems to have become a significant issue for multi-national corporations that increasingly have to deal with varied cultural assumptions of their employees and customers. White's analysis of Jameson's ideas seems odd to say the least. Jameson does not suggest that pastiche is an imitation of "dead styles." Nor does he suggest that pastiche as part of postmodernism needs to be overcome by storytelling, which in turn can solve muddled administrative problems. Jameson's concept of pastiche in *Postmodernism or Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1994) gives us a way of thinking about how the past is produced in the present. In the nostalgia film, the past is produced through juxtaposition of images that have been emptied out of their political content to produce a certain look that was not available in the past. For instance Jameson shows that everything in the film *Body Heat* (1981), "blur[s] its official contemporaneity and make[s] it possible for the viewer to receive the narrative as though it were set in some eternal thirties, beyond real historical time" (21). This is what he terms the "pastiche of the stereotypical past" in order to emphasize that the "look" of the past is being produced by the present narrative. Pastiche is not an imitation of "dead styles." White seems invested in the narrative of "dead styles" because this reading of pastiche allows him to imply that those who continue to use older or "past" management practices to solve present and perhaps future problems employ dead *management* styles. White's implication seems to fit Watkins' description of

“throwaways.” White employs the concept of pastiche to “code” certain practices and people as obsolete. According to White, storytelling can be a corrective to these outmoded management methodologies. He claims that scholarship in management theory “most closely approximates the conventional meaning of a story” because it “include[s] case studies, descriptions of administrative and political events, logical arguments, and interpretations” (172). While case studies and events can indeed be read as stories, scholars of postmodernism would not agree on what a conventional meaning of a story might be, much less on how to apply it to solve administrative problems. Indeed, there is a paradox in White’s appropriation of cultural theory. On one hand, he is a proponent of postmodern theories reading them to identify problems. He advocates casting aside the possibility of “a grand narrative for public administration as a whole” only to study “the development of interconnected, local problems of society” (175). On the other hand, he equates postmodernism with pastiche or as he says “dead styles” suggesting postmodernism is a pathology that must be overcome by storytelling. He asks: “What should be the role of public administration, if any, in dealing with the problems of postmodernism such as the pastiche and schizophrenia that Jameson fears? If society is really as fragmented as Lyotard claims, what role, if any, does public administration have in bringing it together?” (173). In attempting to think through these questions, White conflates the writings of scholars such as Jameson, Lyotard, Derrida, and Foucault. This conflation is not surprising given the fact that he only extracts one basic idea, (the dissolution of grand narratives) from the work of various theorists.

Another management theorist, Mary Jo Hatch, also shares White’s ideas about corrective effects of storytelling. She begins her article “The Role of the Researcher,” by

suggesting that there is a crisis in organization and management theory similar to that in the social sciences. She declares that

After visiting nearly all of the other social sciences, the crisis of representation finally reached organization theory in the early 1990s. The crisis first took shape in the 1980s within the fields of sociology and especially cultural anthropology where it centered on ethnography (e.g., Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Marcus & Fischer, 1986). According to Vidich and Lyman (1994, p. 41), it arose as a challenge to traditional beliefs that ethnography provides "an unmodified and unfiltered record of immediate experience and an accurate portrait of the culture of the "other." (359)

For Hatch, the debates about the nature of inquiry in ethnography, (which actually start earlier than she indicates), can also help question the idea of "objective" experience in organization theory (359). Citing Gérard Genette along with Jacques Derrida, Clifford Geertz, and Michel Foucault, she says, "different ways of knowing are constructed within and through different narrative perspectives " (370). Hatch believes that "the acceptance of varied writing practices with respect to narrative positions should contribute to greater pluralism of perspectives" in management (374). Hatch argues in favor of postmodernist critiques because they show how "modernist [social] scientists ignored their influence on the objects of study and buried their interpretive biases" (368). She goes on to say that "like traditional ethnography," organizational theory "places the researcher outside the frame of the study" and can gain from "interpretive, feminist, and postmodern approaches" that "argue for positioning the researcher within this frame" (360). However, much like White, she conflates works by Foucault, Derrida, Genette, and Geertz because she reads in them only the ideas of self-reflexivity and diversity of opinion, which she claims can be employed to the benefit of management practitioners.

In a sizable part of her essay, Hatch analyzes Geertz's ideas posing them as a solution to the "crisis" in management. Citing his narration of the Balinese cockfight⁵ in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), she shows that Geertz as the narrator and a character "is visible in the text" (364). She further argues that this visibility is a kind of consciousness of self in relation to the scientific work, which permits the author to comment on his or her own role as researcher" (364). Hatch urges management researchers to learn from Geertz's ideas precisely because his presence in the narrative allows him to reflect on his relationship to his own work. Leaving aside for the moment that Geertz is no postmodernist, reflection on the role of the researcher in management theory would surely benefit the nature of knowledge production in the field. However the reflexivity proposed by Hatch parts company with that in Geertz's work. His project is to study what "anthropological analysis amounts to as a form of knowledge" (5). Hatch may be interested in the reflexive nature of research but only insofar as it produces solutions to the perceived crisis in management. She claims that similar to ethnography the crisis in management is partly over "representation." However, instead of reflection over representation leading to inquiry about the production of knowledge itself, it leads to

⁵ Hatch quotes the following excerpt from the *Interpretation of Cultures* (1973): The fights are usually held in a secluded corner of a village in semisecrecy, a fact which tends to slow the action a little--not very much, but the Balinese do not care to have it slowed at all. In this case, however, perhaps because they were raising money for a school that the government was unable to give them, perhaps because raids had been few recently, perhaps, as I gathered from subsequent discussion, there was a notion that the necessary bribes had been paid, they thought they could take a chance on the central square and draw a larger and more enthusiastic crowd without attracting the attention of the law. They were wrong. In the midst of the third match, with hundreds of people, including, still transparent, myself and my wife, fused into a single body around the ring, a superorganism in the literal sense, a truck full of policemen armed with machine guns roared up. Amid great screeching cries of "pulis! pulisi!" from the crowd, the policemen jumped out, and, springing into the center of the ring, began to swing their guns around like gangsters in a motion picture, though not going so far as actually to fire them. On the established anthropological principle, "When in Rome," my wife and I decided, only slightly less instantaneously than everyone else, that the thing to do was run too. (414-415)

conception of effective managerial practices. For instance she argues that, “analysis of the narrating practices of organizational researchers may have direct benefit for managers” (371). She believes that such analysis can offer an “alternative to the authority relationship,” and could help “organizations transition from the authoritarian relationships typical of hierarchical structures to the influence-based, largely egalitarian relationships” (371). There are several issues that need explicating here. To begin with, there is nothing in Hatch’s analysis to suggest that she is actually interested in helping organizations become egalitarian. She addresses managers offering them advice about how to make effective decisions prompting them to adopt less hierarchical interaction or rather she prompts them to adopt the appearance of such relationships. It is difficult to imagine egalitarian relationships being supported by the existing corporate structures in which by definition managers are given more authority and information that helps them exercise control over other employees. Therefore, the idea of “pluralism” and “different cultural perspectives,” instead of being the solution to problems, becomes the “crisis” itself affecting many organizations in the context of globalization. In a way, Hatch is more interested in helping management practitioners deal with the different perspectives of their employees. Furthermore, Hatch’s solution-based approach to administrative problems implies that the “crisis” in management is perhaps over accumulation of capital. Since managers can at times perceive “different cultural perspectives” as a hindrance in generating profit, they must manage diversity effectively. Therefore, in the process of securing profit corrective styles in management become imperative. But more important is the claim that literary and cultural theory can help in this process.

This borrowing from cultural theory does not mean that management theory wants to change the fundamental nature of corporations. In employing cultural theory, management theorists will obviously not adopt David Harvey's, Fredric Jameson's, or Karl Marx's assertions that historical change warrants a fundamental change in the mode of production. Marxist arguments have been dismissed for quite some time. For example, in *The Effective Executive* (1966) Peter Drucker appropriates Marx as a historian of technology and dismisses his work on political economy.⁶ However, Drucker and others seem eager to appropriate literary and cultural issues as long as they can be emptied of their political content. This is evident in the way management theorists dismiss Marx's theories but draw upon theories by other Marxists such as Jameson without realizing as such. The profitability and functionality of culture is the important principle here.

As I have shown earlier, the dislocalizing effect of making culture a principal link to "globalization" produced within management theory, in appears to permit the conclusion that such a theory (or discipline) cannot any longer remain what it is, or was, without becoming more "cultural." Nevertheless the question still remains: why do management theorists look to cultural and literary theory/texts in order to think about organizational issues? We can begin to address this question by examining Tom Peters' ideas in *Liberation Management*. He asks:

Can novels and poetry be considered a "metaphor"?
Perhaps, perhaps not. The point here is the dogged
pursuit of un-ordinary analogs. If fiction and poetry
(drama, opera, etc.) capture life better than other
cultural media, and who would disagree with that,

⁶ For Drucker, economics is not political. In his much later book *The Ecological Vision* (1993), he appropriates Kierkegaard to both dismiss Marxist conceptions that allow for collective freedom and argue implicitly for the free-market enterprise that stresses the individual over the collective.

then why not think of fiction as a model for organization?...
Organizations are fiction—especially the knowledge
based, professional service firms that are tomorrow's best
models." (375)

At this point, Bruce Robbins' anecdote about the businessman with a gun pointed at the head of a literary scholar becomes curiously reversed. Why pose fiction as a model for organization? Peters says, "if you're lucky, your organization—that is 'organization' -- doesn't exist. You can't find it. People aren't in their offices. They're not doing what they're supposed to be doing—not passing paper to and fro... Where are they damn it? If you can answer that question you are Newtonian and in trouble. In the old days we wanted an answer to that question... 'He's in the office...'" But now "ambiguity defines the market. So doesn't it follow, as day follows night, that ambiguity must be... the organization? Um, how do you do a 'chart-and-boxes' depiction of ambiguity?" (379) More importantly, Peters' emphasis on fiction (and/or culture) has a curious affinity with what cultural theory sees as the ambiguity in processes of globalization. As David Harvey has said, it isn't always clear whether the problems are created by globalization or whether globalization makes it possible to see the problems (*Spaces of Hope*, 66).

According to Peters, organizations must be ambiguous and in flux so as to match the flux and ambiguity of the market. We can partly understand this flux and ambiguity through the fluidity of capital flow. In the third volume of *Capital*, Marx refers to the system of credit in general as "fictitious capital." The buying and selling of shares on the stock market neither creates new value nor injects increased capital into the firm whose shares are being traded—with perhaps the exception of new issues. This money is different from the money originally supplied to be used in production. It is an additional amount of money that allows for the circulation of income or profit. In fact, this

circulation represents claims to future income or profits, making it appear that the amount of capital has increased. Drawing upon J.W. Bosanquet's work, Marx states, "it is impossible to decide what part arises out of real bona fide transactions, such as actual bargain and sale, or what part is fictitious and mere accommodation paper, that is, where one bill of exchange is drawn to take up another running, in order to raise a fictitious capital, by creating so much currency" (526). To take the most obvious example of fictitious capital, the increase in price of shares creates the illusion that the stock market is creating value. More specifically, fictitious capital refers to form of capital injection that makes a claim on future productivity and profit. At present, the illusion of financial value created by fictitious capital also appears to enhance the utility of management and marketing disciplines responsible for coming up with "cultural" (or "fictional") strategies for gaining market share or managing cultural diversity.

Employing Giovanni Arrighi's work, Jameson suggests that the present stage of capitalism is characterized by the "feverish search, not so much for new markets... as for the new kind of profits available in financial transactions themselves [such as stocks]... Capital itself becomes free-floating" (*The Cultural Turn*, 142). This financial system has become re-organized in significant ways at the global level. In *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1990), Harvey defines two significant features of the present financial system as follows: 1) the formation of financial conglomerates such as the World Bank and the IMF which, since their inception in 1944 and 1945 respectively, have come to command tremendous global powers; 2) the creation of new financial instruments and markets which in turn produce the proliferation and decentralization of financial activities and flows. Consequently the global financial system has become "so complicated that it

surpasses most people's understanding. The boundaries between distinctive functions like banking, brokerage, financial services, housing finance, consumer credit, and the like have become increasingly porous at the same time that new markets in commodity, stock, currency, or debt futures have sprung up, discounting time future into time present in baffling ways" (161). In other words, the seeking of profit through fictitious capital has become baffling even for those business theorists and practitioners who have been responsible for studying and disseminating ways to understand financial systems. Therefore business theorists suggest that organizations are fictional because it is not exactly clear to them as to how to go about understanding the nature of the present system as a whole. Consequently we see a turn to culture and the cultural and even to literary fiction because they can be presented as new ways of understanding globalization while still being plugged into the old narrative of corporate uses of culture in relation to marketing products and managing personnel diversity. Peters' assertion that organizational conundrums and the way in which organizations are run have "more in common with convolution within convolution in Norman Mailer's *Harlot's Ghost* than with [management theory's latest pronouncements]" shows how literary fiction comes to stand in for the baffling relations of fictional capital (379). In other words, fictional capital relations have become so complicated that attempts to understand them slide out of the 'business' narrative entirely, leaving behind only the cultural as that which encompasses the fictional. Peters' "organizational conundrums"—in other words baffling aspects of organizations—are best reflected in literary fictions. Peters writes:

To read Max Frisch, Paul Bowles, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Antov Chekov, Jane Smiley, Malcolm Lowry, or Norman Mailer is to consume a rich diet of relationships, chance, interconnectedness, songlines, things large within small, small within large,

things within things that nonetheless encompass things that are beyond them. (375)

This turn toward fiction, along with questions such as whether organizations “really” do exist, seems also to emerge from the theoretical underpinnings of postmodern theories. In fact Peters says “let’s hold applause for chaos theory. Instead of the frantic pursuit of total comprehension (via central-control schemes) let’s revel in our very lack of comprehension!” (*Liberation Management*, 491). Although Peters draws upon scientific chaos theory, notions of chaos and apparent synonyms such as conundrum, convolution, and ambiguity would also lead him more towards postmodernist fiction with its emphasis on dissolution of metanarratives, fragmentations and, indeed, chaos. However, he chooses a list of authors and titles that for the most part are not an easy fit into postmodernist paradigms. The disparity between the choice of theory and choice of fiction is similar to the way in which Jay White and Mary Jo Hatch argue paradoxically both for and against postmodernist theories. We can begin to address this issue by examining the context in which literary fiction has started to appear management courses.

Maryville College in Maryville Tennessee, offers a course entitled *Management Through Literature* that satisfies a Business/Management requirement for students. In the course description Gallagher claims that “organizations are human inventions. As such they are subject to all the frailties, foibles, triumphs, and transcendence of human existence.” The rest of the description continues as follows:

Despite efforts to compartmentalize our experience, to value only those attributes that contribute to their own narrow purposes, to nurture “bureaucratic” man, [organizations] are increasingly in need of creativity, commitment, and innovation from their members. Fostering that creativity requires them also to embrace the whole of our nature and our experience. Successful managers then must possess, more so than ever, insight, wisdom, sensitivity, and understanding. One way to

develop these qualities is from years of experience. Another is to take this course. Great literature affords us the opportunity to learn from others who have wrestled with these perennial questions about our nature, our experience, and our existence. (*Management through Literature*, Maryville College)

Therefore literature affords the lessons of wisdom and creativity. However, the emphasis here again is on a recognized canon of literary works. The students in this management course are asked to read the following required texts: *The Heart Aroused*, David Whyte; *Beowulf*, Burton Raffell (trans); *The Remains of the Day*, Kazuo Ishiguro; *Death of a Salesman*, Arthur Miller; *Billy Budd*, Herman Melville; *Henry IV*, Part 1 and 2, William Shakespeare; *Henry V*, William Shakespeare. The course description further states that these books provide a way to “understand concerns, motivations, values, behaviors, of characters, and ultimately to explore themes that are important and relevant to leadership and management” (*Management through Literature*, Maryville College). This list of titles seems to be fairly common among those in management disciplines. For the most part they tend to concentrate on a recognized older set of fictional works with one or two contemporary and lesser-known works. For example, another course at the Harvard Business School titled “The Moral Leader” also assigns the classics *Macbeth* and *The Secret Sharer* alongside *The Last Tycoon*, and *Remains of the Day* and uses the philosophy of “Aristotle, Confucius, and Machiavelli, to clarify the issues of personal character and sound, practical judgment that are crucial to resolving these issues well” (*Elective Curriculum MBA Courses 2001-02, Harvard Business School*).

Literary fiction has a twofold purpose here. Literature helps management theory to grapple with the “perennial questions” if only because “perennial questions” can still appear to have answers in a world mystified by the global and increasingly fictional

nature of finance capital. But literary fiction is also usable because of its perceived emphasis on universal motivations and behavior, categories that, in a time of increasingly diverse markets, appear to be paramount. However, generally speaking, “great” works can fulfill this purpose, especially those that wrestle with “perennial questions” and have passed the test of time and are therefore at least on the surface in a better position to provide answers for a baffling present that seems to be in constant flux. The particular choice of fiction is symptomatic of the fact that management theory seems to be at a loss since it isn’t clear what it is that one is required to do at a time when rules appear to have changed. Things seem to be in chaos, and therefore turning to the classics such as *Beowulf* and *Billy Budd* provides management theory with a way to hold onto something that seems to be “creative” and new. Yet by bestowing a quality of timelessness on these works of literary fiction, management theory attempts to find issues that do not change with the passage of time and history. This represents an attempt to hold onto something that seems timeless and a way to find continuity when discontinuity seems to rule the day. Postmodern literary fiction would, on the contrary, appear to dissolve narratives of greatness, timelessness and continuity. This explanation for the disparity between the choice of fiction and choice of theory might also help us to understand why certain management practitioners paradoxically argue both in favor of and against postmodern theories. They appropriate such theories in order to argue for inclusion of varied perspectives yet only insofar as it permits them to come up with reliable corporate strategies that eventually dissolve postmodern perspectives. As I have demonstrated earlier, in White’s work, postmodernism is a pathology to be overcome through storytelling. Postmodern conditions here largely ask for a return to a recognizable set of

older fictional works that are read for their potential to guide management practitioners through puzzling market conditions.

Literature also endows management theorists with cultural capital through “timeless” literary works. This bears some relation to the idea of a knowledge-based economy invoked by Peters. Peters says that it is “the knowledge-based, professional service firms that are tomorrow’s best models” (375). Investment in the narrative of “great” literature may be explained by the fact that management theory is turning to literature and philosophy for “knowledge” to run the knowledge-based firms. Moreover, the idea of the knowledge-based economy leads us back to fictitious capital since, with industrial production being farmed out to the peripheries, such a “fictional” principle helps to create an illusion that firms do not sell products at all but rather just knowledge. Moreover, the ways of securing capital are no longer clear especially if that capital is sought through shares and requires the firms to sell expertise and knowledge about these problems. Therefore, the choice of particular works of fiction in management theory masks nervousness about capital relations that management theory may be understandably unwilling to admit. The production of cultural knowledge becomes displaced from the culture disciplines and produces a dislocalized effect suggesting that it is not only the literary critic that is nervous but also the business practitioner. The move to incorporate literature, anthropology, and philosophy that does not fit postmodernist paradigms does indeed speak to that nervousness because following postmodernist fiction would be an admission that those who have been responsible for understanding capital relations may not be able to do so anymore. Turning toward the history of Western thought with Aristotle and “great” literature at the same time shows that management

theory perceives itself as being coerced by globalization to do so. And yet even this engagement masks fear and nervousness. Dislocalism takes effect here too in the sense that what is ‘new’ to the disciplines of business and management is in fact valued for its being ‘timeless’—an antidote to both the dangerous fictionality of the present material conditions and material dangers of the new. In addition, the functional quality of literature and philosophy remains intact. The course description for “The Moral Leader” ends by stating, “the course also uses several case studies to illustrate this framework and to help students link the works of fiction to on-the-job issues” (*Elective Curriculum MBA Courses 2001-02*). Here indeed we have a curiously dislocalized picture of Robbins’s businessman with a gun—one that makes it harder to draw the line between the frivolous and the practical object of study, and harder to know at whom, humanist or business manager, the gun should be aimed.

As cultural knowledge leaves its disciplinary home, it becomes displaced and yet more and more functional for business disciplines. It aids corporate projects when it might not want or intend to do so. Disciplinarity must be negotiated as knowledge production itself suffers an increasingly a dislocalizing set of effects. In the rest of this project, I examine the nature of dislocalism in other sites of knowledge production.

Chapter two examines “dislocalist” practices in the more circumscribed field, both scholarly and pedagogical, of immigrant literatures. Here too critics come to displace their “own” field in order to engage with a more global framework—but often only so as to reaffirm, under a new guise, tacitly nationalist, and anything but genuinely global paradigms for such studies. This chapter also re-examines the very notions of “immigration” or “migration” themselves in contemporary conditions. For example, I

explore the ways in which (im)migrant literary fiction imagines displacement both as a process in which (im)migrants are displaced from their homes and as one in which immigration itself produces displacements in the U.S. In "Foreign Investment: A Neglected Variable," Saskia Sassen argues that the heaviest immigration into the United States stems from those nations where American corporate and political forces have most firmly established themselves. Many contemporary American (im)migrant literary works are clearly in conversation with a significant recent history of such U.S. corporate expansion and penetration, and I analyze carefully a series of such works--Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters* (1990), Julia Alvarez's *How the García Girls Lost their Accents* (1991), and Esmeralda Santiago's *When I Was Puerto Rican* (1990) and *América's Dream* (1998)—in this section of my dissertation. I show that critics, driven by "globalization" anxiety to "dislocalize," have read these texts in ways that re-contain the more "global" aspects of immigration within a dominant, U.S. nationalist paradigm in order to categorize them as works of U.S. immigrant/ethnic literatures.

Chapter three looks at contemporary American writers traveling abroad and finding themselves obliged to re-think and re-devise American nationalism, identity, and cultural practices in new social spaces. I examine how, for example, travel writers such as Paul Theroux (*Hotel Honolulu*, 2000), Mary Morris (*Nothing to Declare: Memoirs of a Woman Traveling Alone*, 1988), and Robert Kaplan (*The Ends of the Earth: A Journey at the Dawn of the 21st Century*, 1996) are, in some senses, less concerned to travel per se than to re-define American identity by "dislocalizing" it in travel. I show how, in this spirit, contemporary travel writing updates older travel narratives such as Paul Bowles' *The Sheltering Sky* (1949). Bowles's Africa is an exotic and a faraway place, one in

which the realities of, say, New York seem, at least on the surface, far removed. In contrast, Kaplan's Africa—and indeed the whole “globalized” world—is a place traveled to in order to confirm that its only real differences from the U.S. are both few and, when they still exist, merely abject. Why, then, travel at all? I suggest that by still insisting on the first hand accounts contemporary travel writers are driven mainly to preserve the genre of travel writing itself, because without this “dislocalizing” gesture, a global “American” identity becomes too unstable. To put it another way: “globalization” has purportedly Americanized the world and made the “foreign” itself less tangible. Consequently, the meaning of “travel” itself changes as it becomes a newly privileged means of situating an American national identity.

The fourth and final chapter examines American tourist narratives as presented in television and mass-circulation magazines. Specifically I study the relationship between food and tourism in ethnographic narratives about food published in magazines such as *Food and Wine* and broadcast on television shows such as Anthony Bourdain's *A Cook's Tour*. I show that the current U.S. based mass media food-tourism narratives are responses to the “globalization” of cuisine in the U.S. by looking for “newer” experiences in traveling and by presenting specifically *food* “experiences” from those places they can construct as exotic and perhaps even authentic. For example, since culinary scenes of places such as New York and California are already so influenced by the “globe” and since cities like New York and San Francisco have gained their culinary reputations by the presence of food from around the world, in order to seek “authentic” food cultures, cook-narrators like Bourdain must travel to other nations. But Bourdain does not necessarily travel to learn about food cultures in order to put them to use in his own

kitchen. Rather he is simply seeking “renewal” in order to show that borders between cuisine in the U.S. and other nations have not completely disappeared. Therefore, thanks to the mediating factor of cuisine, he is able to create worlds located outside the U.S. where it is still possible to go on tourist journeys and to produce “ethnographic” narratives about them. More generally, I pay attention to the ways in which the touristic desire for the “exotic,” under pressure from “globalization,” has become increasingly “dislocalized.” With the “exotic” in ever-shorter supply, tourism must now be marketed to Americans as the non-touristic. Food becomes a crucial ingredient here, since it is a form of the “exotic” that can be reproduced anywhere and that is in itself seemingly innocent of the excesses of tourism.

Some of the general questions that I address in the above chapters are:

How do literary and cultural studies produce the discourse and rhetoric of globalization? What are the implications for disciplinary practices as they take up unlikely subject matters to think about the issues of globalization? How is the production of knowledge becoming displaced from its usual home? How does this change the shape of knowledge production? What does it mean to articulate American cultural practices, identity, and national character? I will examine the ways in which each of these sites of knowledge participates in dislocalism by producing a discourse of globalization.

CHAPTER 2
(IM)MIGRATION: PRODUCING A NATIONALIST LITERATURE IN THE "AGE
OF GLOBALIZATION"

Survival of Nationalist Paradigms

In his "Introduction" to a special 2001 *PMLA* issue on "Globalizing Literary Studies" Giles Gunn states that the publication seeks to understand the "influence" that "globalizing tendencies [have] had on revising inherited notions not only of the literary and aesthetic but also of the cultural and the historical" (19). Among the other essays in the issue, Stephen Greenblatt's "Racial Memory and Literary History," is especially indicative of the way in which literary/cultural studies have attempted to grasp theories of globalization. His assertion that "English literary history" is no longer "principally about the fate of the nation; it is a global phenomenon (53)" is widely acknowledged and disseminated in many contemporary scholarly claims regarding the decreasing effectiveness of nationalist paradigms.¹ But for him this waning of nation-centered-ness does not necessarily warrant a re-conceptualization of the way in which we categorize the study of English Literature. Consider, for example, what precisely qualifies as the globalization of English literary history in this essay.

First, Greenblatt argues that English as a global phenomenon does not signal the end of the national model of literary history, "rather it [the national model] has migrate

¹ For a discussion on the nature of nationalism in the context of globalization see Connie McNeely's *Constructing the Nation-State: International Organization and Prescriptive Action* (1995), and Kenichi Ohmae's *The End of the Nation State: The Rise of Regional Economies* (1995).

from the center to periphery where it now flourishes" (53). The "real news," according to Greenblatt, is "not that Shakespeare is being overlooked but rather that some of the most significant novels, plays, and poems are being written in Delhi and Lagos, Atlanta and Antigua" (53). In other words, the shifting of the national model from the center to the periphery makes literary history both global and national. There is no sense here that such a shift affects in any profound way what it means to practice English literary studies or produce its history in either center or periphery. It is simply a question of the outward expansion of what Greenblatt later terms "world culture" (59).

Greenblatt lends an initial plausibility to this view by focusing on the globalizing of its linguistic dimension, viz., the spread across all borders of English, a medium that is nevertheless local and "national" in its origins. "The linguistic medium," he adds, "is no longer the King's English, and despite the power of the American mass media, has never been and can never be the president's English" (53). But this cuts two ways. Although it voids any pretension to restrict the field of "English" to, say, Britain and the U.S., it also neatly secures the privileged place of the center in the periphery. In addition, by making "globalization" out to be primarily a function of shared language, Greenblatt cleanses from "globalization" the centuries of economic and political expansionism, colonialism and unequal exchange that have produced it historically, keeping the newly "globalized" discipline of "English" safely above the fray.²

² Greenblatt attributes this shift outwards to the (Anglophone) periphery in a nationally-centered English studies to both the past efforts of "ideology critique" and to the historical processes of "global capitalism" (53). And he quite legitimately cautions against the dangerously parochial and nativist tendencies even in the efforts of contemporary identity politics to produce, say, de-centered feminist, queer or ethnic minority versions of the canon and of literary history with a reminder of how this can lead to the overt cultivation of "racial memory" in places like contemporary Bosnia where students are asked to identify their ethnic identity and each group "is taught a radically distinct version of history" (53, 56). Integrative, interconnected "national" literary histories—he cites the example of Denis Hollier's *A New History of French Literature*—are, for Greenblatt, far more suitable models for study. But as laudable as it is in a

The attention accorded to globalization in Greenblatt's essay does not require a historical understanding of the emergence of contemporary conditions.³ English literary history, it seems, is a case of the "always already" global. "English," after all, is a part of "world culture," and "world culture does not depend on recent events or on the current strength of the English language. A vital global cultural discourse is ancient..." (59). He adds: "Shakespeare may never have left England, yet his work is already global in its representational range" (59). In this sense, "globalization" becomes a literary methodology that can be applied to a wider, more "global" range of objects, including sixteenth-eighteenth century British literature. Lest he be accused of ignoring what is "globally" new, however, Greenblatt tells us about a visit he paid in Cochin, India to the Malayali poet Balachandran Chulikkad. The latter is widely known and well-liked among the local masses, but cites Walt Whitman as his inspiration. This effectively leaves the centrality of "English"—Whitman, but also Shakespeare, Austen, et. al.--intact.

This concerted effort to preserve the centrality of British and American literature, even if these must be rethought within the current paradigm shift of globalization, highlights the de-reifying⁴ nature of globalizing forces—forces that make it less easy to

certain context, this critique allows Greenblatt not only to protect a more cosmopolitan national-literary model from fragmentary divisions, but also to protect it from theories of globalization that would point to the objective grounds for its inevitable dissipation. "Globalization" is accommodated, in the end, through its complete de-historicization.

³ He says nothing about how the processes of globalization are placing pressure on the idea of national literary history, only that "we need to understand colonization, exile, emigration, wandering, contamination, etc..." (62). These ideas have contemporary currency but can equally well be used to describe much older periods of history, literary or otherwise.

⁴ Georg Lukacs in *History and Class Consciousness* defines "namely, a form of alienation issuing from the commodity fetishism of modern market relations." In some aspects, Re-ification is the historical fragmentation of labor relations. According to Lukacs, this reification becomes visible only in moments of crisis. Insofar as globalization can be deemed a crisis, it makes it possible for us to see the connection

overlook the connections between the various national and regional spheres of literary studies such as American and British along with Caribbean literature etc. As some aspects of globalization produce what is perceived as the threat of erasure of English studies from the university curriculum, literary practitioners work to re-conceptualize the field so that its secure reification once again becomes possible.

Let me pause here to re-emphasize two significant aspects of dislocalism: 1) institutional practices *produce* the discourse of globalization (globalism) and aid in constructing its “theories” (however unintentionally) while appearing to merely respond to a set of inevitable conditions; 2) members of institutions perceive that they must displace their practices, both so as to produce viable information and work suitable for the “era” of globalization and also to buttress the institutions themselves against too radical a displacement. This dual aspect of dislocalism is produced at various levels and takes variable shapes in different institutions and practices. Chapter 1 has shown how dislocalism is produced in the disciplines of management and cultural/literary studies. Dislocalism in literary studies, then, is a strategy that critics employ to produce a larger transnational context for various categories such as American literature –whose partial displacement is advocated only so as to solidify the nationalist category *per se*. Dislocalism allows them to redraw the lines and present their work as viable in the context of globalization, thus helping to ensure their own continued professional existence at the same time. Through the dislocalizing practices of literary critics such as Greenblatt, we can see that even though forces of globalization are rapidly spreading across national borders, it does not mean that the concept of nationhood is dying nor,

between various fragments. Contending with theories of globalization in literary studies challenges us to think about not only how various disciplines are interconnected.

necessarily, that it should be condemned to death. In fact the sometimes desperate-seeming attempts to hold onto nationalist paradigms in a variety of contexts speaks to the continued viability of the notion. In this chapter, I will examine how the concept of immigration and immigrant literatures helps American literary studies to construct a nationalist literature and to dislocalize its practices, even while producing globalism.⁵ While the idea of immigration has long helped the U.S. to produce a national imaginary, the concept must evidently now itself be dislocalized in order to serve the same purpose in the “new era.”

Immigration as a Dislocalizing Concept

The rhetoric of the U.S. as a nation of immigrants has, from the beginning, been used to consolidate national borders. Yet this rhetoric also continuously breaks down because, despite its centrality in American self-definition and identity, there remains something inherently marginal—and not to be consolidated-- about the figure of the immigrant.

Thomas Jefferson states the following in his *A Summary View of British Rights in America* (1774):

Our ancestors, before their emigration to America, were the free inhabitants of the British dominions in Europe, and possessed a right which nature has given to all men, of departing from the country in which chance, not choice, has placed them, of going in quest of new habitations, and of there establishing new societies, under such laws and regulations as to them seem more likely to promote public happiness (64).

Jefferson's words here serve as a good example of this rhetoric of America as open to immigration and subsequent happy settlement—a rhetoric that has long since inhabited

⁵ As opposed to the historical processes of globalization, I refer to the discourse of globalization as globalism. See chapter 1.

the American imagination and has taken on the status of a cliché. In fact as William Appleman Williams suggests in "Immigration as a Pattern in American Literature" immigration has become such an integral part of the definition of the U.S. that it comes to define America in ways that affects non-immigrants as well. As he says: the "impact of immigration is the quintessential American experience, establishing a pattern that is replicated in almost every aspect of American life." (19). "Whatever it is that sets us moving," he continues, "many of us, like immigrants, experience at some level the sense of loss of the old and the familiar, and varying kinds of "culture shock" still await even those of us who have been born here, as we move from one part of America to another" (22). Williams elasticizes the concept of immigration to describe the everyday experiences of people within the U.S.⁶

But despite Williams' claims that most Americans experience dislocations similar to those experienced by immigrants, and that immigration is a central aspect of being an American, the term "immigrant" and the condition of immigration are also exclusive to those on the outside or on the fringes of what can be called the dominant American experience. This notion of immigration as essential to American identity is inseparable from the idea that the immigrant is always an outsider, and is implicit in the very production of the U.S. as a both local and global place.

That is, *along with* its centrality, there has been and remains something fundamentally *marginal* about the figure of the immigrant.⁷ Walter Benn Michaels'

⁶ Williams' argues that dislocations similar to that of immigration are found everyday experiences of people. Going away to college and moving away from family to make a home for oneself are such examples of importance in American cultural experiences.

⁷ This marginality is explored in the immigrant fiction of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, as, for example, in writers such as Abraham Cahan (*The Rise of David Levinsky*, 1917) and Anzia Yezierska (*Breadgivers*, 1925). Cahan's work explores the marginal status of the immigrant-protagonist despite his success as a businessman in the United States. Such literary works represent America both as a generous,

discussion of the Immigration Act of 1924 shows how both the centrality and marginality of the figure of the immigrant provided the U.S. with a form of national identity that in turn shifted the identity-formation of those living in the U.S. as well that of potential immigrants. He describes how national identity depended upon the distinction between altered notions of “American and un-American” in the 1920s (2). Michaels explains that The Immigration Act of 1924 made access to American citizenship dependent upon ethnic identity.⁸ And since the future immigrants were often connected to those already living in the United States, the Act required fundamental changes in the definition of American identity for residents and citizens as well. For example, while

Italian Americans and Swedish Americans were equally American, their Italianness and Swedishness now took on a new significance, since it was their ancestral identity (their identity as descendants of Swedes or Italians) as distinguished from their political identity (their identity as Americans) that would determine the access to American citizenship of future Italians or Swedes (30).

Michaels, moreover, goes on to point out that “if the purpose of the Johnson Act was officially to exclude groups of people from citizenship, the purpose of the Indian Citizenship Act [which gave citizenship to Indians born in the U.S. and also passed in 1924] was just the opposite” (30). The two acts, voted into legislation within a week of each other, emphasized how the how the idea of both inside/outside has been

open place (through heroic narratives in which the immigrants buy a passage across the seas and with a few bumps along the road become successful Americans) and as a place where the sad loss of an older identity and where new experiences of discrimination take shape.

⁸ The Immigration Act of 1924 forbade most immigration from Asian countries and limited the number of other newcomers to about 150,000 a year. The number of immigrants to come from each country was known as a quota. Quotas were based upon the number of persons of each nationality in the United States. The quota system did not cut down the number of immigrants from the countries of western Europe as sharply as it did immigration from other parts of Europe.

integral to American identity.⁹ As Michaels says: “Where the Johnson Act identified the racial groups which would be prevented, ideally, from becoming American, the Citizenship Act celebrated that racial group which ideally had succeeded” (31). These acts point to what Werner Sollors calls the tensions between consent and descent. In *Beyond Ethnicity* (1986), he writes: “Descent language emphasizes our positions as heirs and our hereditary qualities, liabilities, and entitlements; consent language stresses our abilities as mature free agents and ‘architects of our fates’ to choose our spouses, our destinies and our political systems” (6). While the investment in the notion of the U.S. as a place of consent has had a strong hold, issues of descent—who is allowed to be the consenting American, and who is excluded—remain firmly in place, not the least because of the *shifting* of immigration policies themselves.

It becomes evident that in discussions on various issues regarding immigration—questions of economic benefit, of the nature of assimilation, etc.—attempts are being made to delineate American identity itself. This delineation has been especially crucial since the rhetoric associated with questions of American identity has been preoccupied with preservation of “old” ways that seem threatened with each major wave of immigration. The worry over American identity is reflected in concerns about whether various groups will be able to shed their “old world” identities and assimilate into the

⁹ Who occupies the position of the outsider has changed historically. The 1965 Hart-Celler Act, in the wake of the civil rights movement, that allowed for more decidedly racially marked non-Europeans to immigrate to the United States worked to level the differences to some degree between nationalities of the early immigrants whose racial and ethnic strife was carried over into the United States. And consequently helped to place the Europeans including the Jews, Irish and Italians under the umbrella of “whiteness.” Therefore since racialized ethnicity became the focus of debates about civil rights, racially marked immigrants populations especially from South of the border became a source of contention. Consequently some immigrants have become more marked and more outside than others.

existing structures in the U.S. Thus, for example, writers in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, including Benjamin Franklin and Ralph Waldo Emerson, consciously took on the task of defining the “American” as self-reliant and self-sufficient. These writings drew upon the notion of the “foreign” to define American-ness and positioned the United States as a nation of nations—an idea employed even today in chronicling the accomplishments of immigrants. More importantly, the image of immigrants coming to the U.S. with nothing and working from the ground up in order to make a living, has been an extremely crucial one for the way that it suggests rebirth of the immigrant upon reaching the U.S. and the re-positioning of the “foreignness” of the immigrants within the domestic borders.

This re-positioning then provides the immigrants with their particular identities in relationship to the United States. In *The Next American Nation* (1995), Michael Lind describes this phenomenon in a more contemporary context. He suggests that many of the differences between groups of people that make up the population living within a nation are mitigated once they immigrate to the U.S., and are asked to join already existing homogenized ethnic categories. Lind further suggests that the vision of America as a “mosaic of five races—white, black or African Americans, Hispanic or Latinos, Asian and Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans” – propagates the idea that immigrants must give up

their desire to integrate within the larger nation, and instead forces them to assimilate into bureaucratic categories (Mexicans and Cubans join Hispanic America ; Chinese, Indians, and Filipinos join Asian and Pacific Islander America, and so on). Moreover

each race, in addition to preserving its cultural unity and distinctness is expected to act as a monolithic political bloc. (98)¹⁰

In effect, the immigrants become localized ethnics in the United States. While Lind's more contemporary immigrants are more racially marked than earlier immigrants, localizing them does not necessarily help to put these immigrants on equal footing with other more established immigrants.

Sollors' discussion of ethnicity and American politics helps us think about issues of race and ethnicity as part and parcel of the discussions surrounding immigration, as well as immigrant literatures per se. He makes a case for thinking of race as only part of the larger category of ethnicity. Sollors writes that "two conflicting uses of ethnic and ethnicity have remained in the air. A universalist or inclusive use that marks French Canadians or the Pennsylvania Dutch as ethnic is in frequent conflict with the other use of the word, which excludes dominant groups and thus establishes an "ethnicity minus one" (25). Obviously more racially marked immigrants are the more often excluded ones. Therefore, despite the connection between the idea of the immigrant and the idea of the ethnic, the rhetoric of immigration in the U.S. often positions the newer immigrants in opposition to older more established residents of the U.S."¹¹ This tension is often depicted in literary

¹⁰ Given the fact that much of immigrant/ethnic writings is taught under labels that correspond to these bureaucratic categories, they play a powerful role in shaping the scholarship produced on such literatures.

¹¹ This division is particularly sharp in conversations regarding immigrants and the domestic economy, especially in terms of the labor market. George Borjas discusses this issue with respect to more recent immigrants and the African American population in "The Impact of Immigrants on Employment Opportunities of Natives." The debates on affirmative action, wage conditions, and job security generally presuppose a disconnection between African-Americans and recent immigrants. The nature and scope of these debates suggests to a significant group of African-Americans already in low paying employment that their job security is threatened by immigrants (especially those who are undocumented) willing to do the same job for even lower wages. But, as Borjas argues: "empirical evidence indicates that immigrants do not have a major impact either on the earnings or on the employment levels of natives in the U.S. labour

works as arising even *between* people of the same ethnic groups, according to the length of the time they have been living in the U.S. For example, the term “Fresh-Off-the-Boat” in both older and more contemporary Asian American literatures points to contentions between and among various groups of people.

Sollors’ description of the ethnic or ethnicity as signifiers according to whose logic everyone both becomes an “ethnic” and yet some are more “ethnic” than others runs parallel to the logic of the signifier “immigrant.” The rhetoric of the U.S. as a country of immigrants makes all Americans immigrants—just as, of necessity, everyone is on some level an “ethnic.” The term “immigrant” nevertheless continues to designate those who are different or “other” in some way. Unity is sought in diversity, but for such unity to exist, something, or someone, has to remain on the outside. A “unity” cannot simply be the sum of its parts. It must have an “other” as well.

Recent theories of globalization, moreover, have called stable and localized ethnic identities positioned as insider/outsider into question. In fact the very idea of immigration as migration from one place and “into” another is itself under scrutiny. For example, in “Change and Convergence?” Thomas Heller considers whether

market” (228). Policy-makers who argue that immigrants are stealing jobs from legal citizens in order to justify the shifting of immigrant quotas and policies, assume that there is a set numbers of jobs and that the economy does not expand with the incoming immigrants. Those who espouse and propagate such beliefs create a disconnection between the newer immigrants and legal citizens, especially those in lower paying jobs. As Borjas points out, often people raise this concern primarily in connection with Hispanic populations and suggest that “blacks are the groups whose economic income progress is more likely to be hurt by the entry of immigrants in the United States” (224). He goes on to argue that despite the lack of data or even data that shows no effects, the debate on immigration policy has “continually used the presumption that immigrants have an adverse impact on the labour market to justify many of the restrictions in immigration law” (227).¹¹ Assumptions that immigrants take away jobs from natives not only works to insert a wedge between various minority groups but also to fuel immigration policies that have kept the conditions of low-wage labor alive for most minority groups.

immigration can still serve as a defining idea for the United States since immigration has become an integral part of the definition of the European Union as well. This is only one example of how (im)mobility around the world might lead the United States to assess the concept of immigration. Furthermore, in "Patriotism and its Futures," Arjun Appadurai suggests that the U.S. is not so much a nation of nations or immigrants but one node in a postnational network of diasporas" (423). He argues that the United States is "no longer a closed space for the melting pot to work its magic, but yet another diasporic switching point, to which people come to seek their fortunes but are no longer content to leave their homelands behind" (424). He goes on to say that

No existing concept of Americanness can contain this large variety of transnations. In this scenario, the hyphenated American might have to be twice hyphenated (Asian-American-Japanese, or Native-American-Seneca or Africa-American-Jamaican or Hispanic-American-Bolivian) as diasporic identities stay mobile and grow more protean. Or perhaps the sides of the hyphen will have to be reversed, and we can become a federation of diasporas (424).

Appadurai's comments have significant consequences for scholarship on American immigrant literatures. While he may be a bit too quick to say that immigration has been supplanted by migration, his comments suggest that the positioning of (im)migrants as outside of the American dominant experience has become extremely complex. Appadurai's "federation of diasporas" does not signify a definitive passage to the U.S., but rather, speaks to Saskia Sassen's contention that forces of globalization produce movement toward cities. For example, in the *Mobility of Labor and Capital*, Sassen explains that people moving from various parts of the U.S. as well as from other nations say to New York are part of the same complex system that produces migration toward

cities in the context of globalization. Therefore the division of movement between nations and within a nation becomes less clear. Since, according to Appadurai, the concept of immigration from one nation to another is being displaced by the notion of global flows, it becomes imperative for various sites of knowledge production invested in the idea of Americanness, including American literary studies, to reproduce the space of nationalism. Declarations by critics such as Kenichi Ohama that nationalism's boundaries are coming apart work to preserve the notion of the bounded space of the nation state.¹²

While a significant number of the earlier immigrant narratives portrayed immigrants as negotiating their ethnicity and their status within this bounded space of the U.S., more contemporary narratives present immigrants to the U.S. as conducting the same negotiation in a world much more interconnected. To this effect, critics such as Appadurai and Sassen emphasize the following in discussions of contemporary immigration: 1) Immigrants themselves live a life that is often divided between their homelands and the U.S; 2) in some sense people need not physically immigrate to experience the conditions of immigration, both because they are in contact with those who have and are living in a world where movement has become easier and a normal part of life and because those unable to move are nevertheless formed by this experience; 3) there is a heightened awareness that the nations sending the largest numbers of immigrants into the U.S. are themselves, as nations, conditioned by, if not the products of the history of American intervention in these locales.

As literary critics undergo pressures to globalize their fields, they must then find a way to displace their fields in order to continue to exist as members of literature

¹² See *The End of the Nation State* (1995).

departments. In the contemporary, “globalized” context critics present immigrant/ethnic literatures as cultural texts able to mediate current discussions on globalization because such literature has itself always produced an imaginary of dislocation and has always allowed a connection of the U.S. to the rest of the world.¹³ Yet, might not the interest of critics in this broadening of literary scholarship be to *continue*, under new conditions, the work that has always defined the field of American marginal literatures?

I will try to demonstrate in what follows how the figure of the excluded is taken up in literary studies not only to criticize the marginalizing of certain groups of people, but also to appropriate that very same figure and transform it into something more positive, something manifesting a desire to remain outside the dominant. This particular critical move has come to be associated with approaches to contemporary American ethnic and immigrant literatures that not only challenge more traditional, parochial approaches, but that also permit literary studies to dislocalize its own practice. The positioning of the ethnic-as-immigrant “outside” an older version of the pluralist American canon may be just what is required to keep the real, de-reifying forces of globalization at bay.

However, before I turn directly to the analysis and critique of dislocalism in the specific case of literary approaches—both pedagogical and critical—to contemporary immigrant literature, I want to devote some time to discussing further questions of nationalism, multi-culturalism and identity politics. The fact that—as I will argue—the literature of (im)migration is being read and taught from the standpoint of domestic

¹³ Many of the texts written by immigrant writers that are in conversation with conditions of immigrations are often organized in literary curricula under the categories of localized U.S. ethnicities. For example, Julia Alvarez’s *How the García Girls Lost their Accents* is shelved under the categories such as Latino/a, Hispanic, Ethnic American literatures.

multiculturalism and identity politics precisely so as to dislocalize this literature (i.e., to subordinate it to the ultimate purpose of re-positioning “American-ness”) should not be taken to mean that identity politics and multi-culturalism can be reduced to *nothing but* this dislocalizing ideology, or that they have not, in fact, played a vital role in making literary studies more critical. Thus in what remains of the first section of this chapter, I will discuss how the identity politics within multiculturalism has historically proved to be important and has taken significant steps towards challenging the marginalizing of various groups of people. And yet at the same time it produces some of the same marginalization that it repudiates. A major thrust of identity politics is to create a space for the marginalized that is outside the cultural dominant of the U.S., a space perceived as divisive to nationalist paradigms. But in response to globalization, critics have been pressed to find ways of presenting this very same figure of division and the fragmentary, drawn from identity politics, so as, in a seeming paradox, to shore up nationalist paradigms. The relative advance represented by identity politics quickly becomes a form of dislocalizing retreat before the onslaught of the forces of globalization.

In “The Politics of Recognition” Sonia Kruks succinctly sums up the gist of identity politics. She writes: “what is demanded is respect for oneself as fundamentally different” (123). Significantly “questions about ‘What is to be done’ are frequently displaced on the Left today by questions about who ‘we’ are” (122). Kruks goes on to suggest that “What makes identity politics a significant departure from such earlier forms of the politics of recognition is its demand for recognition on the basis of the very grounds in which it has previously been denied: it is qua woman, qua black, qua lesbian or gay—and not qua incarnation of universal human qualities—that

recognition is demanded and moral superiority sometimes asserted" (123). In this regard, the basis of previous marginalization becomes the source of self-identification. As Krus points out: "the demand is not for inclusion within the fold of 'universal mankind' on the basis of shared attributes, nor even for respect in spite of one's difference. Rather, what is demanded is respect for oneself as fundamentally different" (123). This idea of fundamental difference--crucial to multiculturalism and designed to question the myth of cohesive national identity--received hostile reception in the middle of the culture wars and their aftermath.¹⁴

Prominent public figures such Dinesh D'Souza (Reagan Administration) and Arthur Schlesinger (John F. Kennedy's Presidential Assistant and Historian) see identity politics as antinationalist, divisive and fragmentary to a cohesive national identity and best to be dispensed with.¹⁵ As opposed to D'Souza, Schlesinger, who has operated in the liberal camp, is the writer of 16 books, winner of the Pulitzer Prize, and who has played a significant role in shaping history education in the U.S., argues against what he perceives as separatist tendencies of identity politics in the pressures of globalization. In his book the *Disuniting of America*,¹⁶ he says:

The movement from exclusion to inclusion, uneven but persevering, is one of the grand themes of American history. This is what has enabled a miscellany of polyglot peoples to form a single nation. Yet militant multiculturalists, instead of recognizing the beauty of e pluribus unum, prefer to dismiss unum and exalt pluribus. All this comes at a time when the murderous disintegration of one country after another around the globe gives new urgency to the question: what holds a nation together?

¹⁴ See for example, Gregory Jay's *American Literature and the Culture Wars* (1997), and Gerald Graff's *Beyond the Culture Wars* (1992).

¹⁵ D'Souza was the domestic policy analyst for the Reagan Administration, and is the author of books such as *The End of Racism* (1995), and *Liberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus*, 1991.

¹⁶ First published in 1991 and reissued in 1998

So concerned is Schlesinger about the separatist tendencies of multiculturalist identity politics that he uses the brutal division of other nations along ethnic lines (that emerged from many complex historical circumstances and not necessarily from multiculturalism) to suggest that the U.S. could be headed in the same direction. In addition, Schlesinger's comments emerge partially from the way he perceives globalization. While on the one hand Schlesinger says that aspects of globalization such as the "world market, electronic technologies... all undermine the nation-state and develop a world without frontiers" on the other hand, he sees globalization as an intergrative force that inevitably produces multiculturalist separatism. He observes that "the world shrinks and its population is more mixed up today than ever before" (12). This shrinkage according to Schlesinger tears the "world in opposite directions—intense pressures toward globalization on one hand, toward fragmentation on the other" (12). He sees the processes of globalization as intergrative ones that link the world together and "the more the world integrates, the more people cling to their own in groups increasingly defined these post-ideological days by ethnic and religious loyalties"—loyalties he regards as fragmentary (12). For Schlesinger, globalization may undermine the nation-state but it is not as evil as the dangerously disjunctive cultural identity politics and is certainly not the answer to or refuge from unrelenting forces of globalization.

Conversely, critics who take a multiculturalist perspective see identity politics as a way to intervene in dominant cultural practices to make space for those on the margins and to expand the ways in which we define American identity. They are interested in disrupting the rhetoric of assimilation, as is evident in calls for minorities to construct a

space of their own outside of dominant cultural practices. In literary studies, this is evident in both the existence of literary categories such as Asian American or African American literatures (that have a space of their own in the curriculum) and in scholarship on multiethnic literatures that champions the need of ethnic/immigrant protagonists in literary works to break out of oppressive domination from the mainstream and preserve their localized ethnic practices.

However, this particular move does not necessarily make changes in the literary curriculum but rather immigrant/ethnic texts are simply added to and absorbed by the curriculum leaving the existing structure intact. On some level the multiculturalists are just as invested in preserving nationalist boundaries as the anti-multiculturalists, even suggesting that the study of American literature, history, culture is incomplete without adequate minority perspectives. But they do so with very different ideological stakes than the anti-multiculturalists. While the anti-multiculturalists are interested in assimilation and worry that the newer immigrants with their radically different cultural assumptions and identity politics will destroy any cohesive national identity, the multiculturalists lament the same fragmentation but foreground racism and sexism in order to suggest that the myth of assimilation has never materialized and that recognizing the differing cultural identities of various localized groups does not necessarily break up the nation but adds diversity and healthily invigorates it.

The multiculturalists share Schlesinger's views to some extent. Critics widely acknowledge that globalizing forces are driving nation-states to become weaker and concur with Schlesinger that "internationalizing forces drive ordinary people to seek refuge from unrelenting global currents" (12). In fact, a large project in literary studies

involves an attempt to seek this refuge. I will show that in many ways multiculturalists share the project of consolidating U.S. national borders with the anti-multiculturalists in the context of globalization. However, though multiculturalists argue that identity politics preserves differences when homogenization is becoming the norm and use it to question ideas of unity, such arguments do not fragment the national imaginary. In effect, identity politics helps to shore up the national borders.

To this purpose the concept of immigration becomes extremely important because it places the U.S. in a more global context and highlights the connection between the population in the United States and the world, and yet preserves the national boundaries, maintaining that the U.S. continues exist as a receptacle for people who wish to come to and re-mould themselves as Americans. Therefore identity politics, through which immigrant groups work to preserve cultural practices bearing some resemblance to their previous ones in their home countries, itself becomes a necessary aspect of the operation whereby nationalist paradigms are displaced in the study of immigrant/ethnic literatures mere so as to preserve them on a more abstract plane.

The history of racist and sexist exclusions in the United States and the fight against them is intimately identified with the movements of the 1960s that in turn drew upon the movements of anti-colonial liberation around the world. Partha Chatterjee's discussions of identity in relationship to anti-colonial struggles can, for this reason, shed partial light on the nature of the identity politics within the United States. In his book, *The Nation and Its Fragments* (1993), Chatterjee writes:

Anti-colonial nationalism creates its own domain of sovereignty within colonial society well before it begins its political battle with

the imperial power. It does this by dividing the world into two domains—the material and the spiritual. The material is the domain of the ‘outside,’ of the economy and of state-craft, of science and technology where the West has proved its superiority and the East has succumbed. In this domain, then, Western superiority had to be acknowledged and its accomplishments carefully studied and replicated. The spiritual on the other hand, is an ‘inner’ domain bearing the ‘essential’ marks of cultural identity. The greater one’s success in imitating Western skills in the material domain, therefore, the greater the need to preserve the distinctness of one’s spiritual domain. This formula is, I think, a fundamental feature of anti-colonial nationalisms in Asia and Africa. (6)

The notion of cultural identity as it arose as part of anti-colonial movements in various parts of the world is intricately connected to the demand for political sovereignty, for the right to determine governance and other political structures. Since during the civil rights period minorities in the U.S. demanded equal rights, exhibited a desire to be given the opportunity that others already had, and aspired to replicate the dominant ideologies of schooling and eventual employment opportunities, the need for an identity politics on the part of minority groups became and, to an extent, has remained paramount. The notion of identity politics is inseparable, in fact, from the affirmation of a diverse, “multi-cultural” set of identities, and in this sense a multiculturalist politics has indeed represented a necessary improvement over what were once outright exclusions based on identity. It has proved especially important for immigrants to attempt to preserve their cultural identities, and the idea that they ought to be able to do so is a significant improvement over prior demands for homogeneous assimilation. Since the historical and cultural traditions of minorities have been relegated to the margins, there is a strong desire on the part of minorities to recover, imagine and bring their cultural traditions to the forefront in the spirit of uncovering nationally fragmentary and divisive racist and sexist practices.

This is particularly salient in conversations about the literary canon in the American academy. Writers and literary scholars who advocate multiculturalism have used the category of immigrant/ethnic literatures in order to demand the inclusion of such texts in the canon, and to intervene in the very conception of American literature and indeed in the very conception of a literature based on a national paradigm. Much like the discussions on immigration and immigrants, debates on the canon follow the logic of inclusion and exclusion. In *Cultural Capital* (1993), John Guillory says: “the critique of the canon has always constructed the history of canon formation as a conspiracy of judgment, a secret, and exclusive ballot by which literary works are chosen for canonization because their authors belong to the same group as the judges themselves, or because these works express the values of the dominant group” (28). In other words, critics have made a case for including ethnic/immigrant literatures in the canon because they had previously been excluded. Guillory critiques the rhetoric of inclusion/exclusion in saying that “if the process of judgment is more complicated than the electoral analogy suggests, this model of canon formation will have to be discarded” (28). The model that Guillory invokes as the accepted one is indeed more complicated and perhaps should be discarded. However, while not literally conspiratorial or sinister, literary history has been and remains a practice that entails exclusions. Exclusions in some form will persist as long as we follow the logic of the syllabi, but exclusions based on race and gender are not mere matters of perception.

Nevertheless pleas for inclusions based on previous marginalization have resulted in the creation of separate and additive literary categories, even if they are in no way so murderously dangerous as Schlesinger might fear. Multiculturalists have sought to

produce separate canons of literatures by women, immigrant/ethnic writers that question the category of American literature, and also read rebelliously within the older established canon pointing to the racism and sexism of the celebrated writers. This methodology emerges primarily from the following assumptions 1) literatures by marginalized groups needs attention; 2) categories such as Asian-American literature are necessarily different and outside of the mainstream American literature; 3) such categories are created based upon the writer's identity, necessarily emphasizing the differences espoused by those belonging to ethnic groups.

The contention that literary studies needs to adequately represent the works of minorities has led universities to designate the curricular place of courses on African or Asian American literature as separate from that of more mainstream literatures. The fact that minority writers are seen as add-ons coupled with the trend that minority scholars are encouraged to pursue the fields closely related to their "own" cultural backgrounds not only produces reification (in the sense that there isn't a infrastructure through which the addition of newer or different material would necessarily influence the mainstream courses) but also sets into motion the ghettoizing of minorities who are mostly slotted in the teaching and learning of this material. The assumption operating here is that the minority instructor or the student is an insider with special insights into the texts. Minority students receive the message that they are experts in race-related issues (and not very knowledgeable in others) and therefore should pursue a course of study that is closely related to their racial and ethnic identities. These practices also imply that the students' experience of racism is more credible in a classroom than scholarship and literary works about racism. There is no doubt that minority students are in many ways

outside the mainstream since the educational apparatus systematically works against minorities on many different levels. This points to the breakdown of the national rhetoric of equal opportunity. However, this position of racial and gendered persons as critically outside the mainstream where they alone are given the responsibility to speak about discrimination (which the mainstream can choose to either accept or reject) is an unbelievable burden. Furthermore, the romanticization of the ‘outsider’ position that also tries to elevate minorities as possessing wisdom from which others can learn vicariously through their experiences does not do much for to remove minorities from marginalized positions. Positing racial and gender identity as a position to oppose dominant ideologies produces a politics almost entirely based on cultural identity, and is employed to scrutinize the rhetoric of assimilation and complicate the notion of a unified national identity.

The crucial point in all this remains, however: that, at least in the context of contemporary literary and cultural studies, identity politics’ most prized notions—“multiculturalism,” “diversity,” and the generalized figure of the dominated “other” that these principles themselves demand to be maintained in some exteriority to the dominant culture—are easily ‘dislocalized.’ As, ultimately, an argument for inclusion, identity politics has played an important and positive role in recent history. The question is, “inclusion” within *what*? It becomes especially clear in the way that identity politics and multiculturalism have sought to incorporate the figure of the immigrant into their own project of universality that this project remains, fundamentally, a nationalist one. This is what we will study in detail in the next section that follows.

Dislocalist Practices in Literary Criticism

I will examine this particular dislocalism in literary studies by focusing on the scholarship on contemporary immigrant literatures. Specifically I will examine criticism on Julia Alvarez's *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents* (1989), Jessica Hagedorn's *Dog eaters* (1990), and Esmeralda Santiago (*When I was Puerto Rican*, 1993 and *América's Dream*, 1998). I will show how the curricular locus of these works as immigrant/ethnic fiction that are now assigned a place under more or less stable categories of study as a result of the work on the canon, helps critics to produce globalism while reproducing a dislocalized nationalist imaginary within a domestic paradigm of race and gender. I will examine why in its criticism and teaching Alvarez's novel is readily accepted into the categories of American immigrant/ethnic fiction, whereas *Dog eaters* is less a part of American literary studies and shares its borders with postcolonial studies. The dislocalism in *Dog eaters* becomes more pronounced as critics try to reposition it in American ethnic/immigrant category. Esmeralda Santiago's works tend to appear within discussions of borders and hybrid identity (since this work is technically not written by an immigrant even if issues of immigration apply) positioning it within domestic race and gender politics.

I have chosen these particular works by women writers for several reasons. They are widely taught in university classrooms. And they are also representative of how literary practitioners have produced a canon of immigrant/ethnic literatures with a heavy concentration of women writers partially because women writers and their female protagonists allow for conversations about race and gender to occur simultaneously. In addition, these novels portray certain aspects of contemporary conditions of

(im)migration for women such as feminization of low-waged and temporary labor. Furthermore, these works in some way speak to what Saskia Sassen has explained as “some of the main features of immigration”-- “growing prominence of certain Asian and Caribbean Basin countries as sources of immigrants and the rapid rise in the proportion of female immigrants... (37, *Globalization and its Discontents*).¹⁷ I will show that though these texts seem to be in conversation with historical processes that complicate issues of localized immigrant identities, critics attempt to re-appropriate those aspects and produce work involving issues of identity in order to preserve their fields.

Julia Alvarez's *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents*

How the García Girls Lost Their Accents by Julia Alvarez is widely taught in courses on American ethnic and immigrant literature and on U.S. women of color and has become almost a permanent fixture in these categories. A search for courses that teach this book shows that for the most part they are interested in the domestic politics of identity, emphasizing issues of cultural conflict.¹⁸ But the *García Girls* has also begun to make appearances in courses that discuss globalization.¹⁹ The presence of the *García*

¹⁷ As Saskia Sassen has shown “there is a large mobilization of young women into waged labor... There is now a female labor supply competing with jobs for men, a supply that didn't exist only a few years ago” and the “widespread practice of firing the new, mostly female, workers after a few years [by multinationals in their homelands] also adds to the pool of potential emigrants (*Mobility of Labor and Capital*, 19).

¹⁸ University of Michigan, for example, offers a course on *American Cultures: Intro to Latino/a Studies*, in which students read both the *García Girls* as well as Esmeralda Santiago's *América's Dream*, is quite typical of how such novels are made to fit into the literary curriculum. The course description reads as follows:

This course will serve as an introduction to the study of the historical situation of Latina/o cultures within the United States. Basic questions of cultural conflict, identity, social movements, labor, migrations and immigrations will be addressed through various media, including the short story, poetry, performance, music, film, and autobiography. Emphasis will be upon issues of race, gender, class and sexuality as they inform the making of these social positions. (*Yoha Course Community, American Cultures*)

¹⁹ For example, a Latino/a Studies course *Literary and Cultural Dimensions of Latino Culture in the United States* at SUNY, Stony Brook Border Cultures, requires Alvarez's book as part of discussions that range from such subjects as “Latino performative artists, key films...[and] the globalization of ‘salsa’ music resulting from the growing shifts in the Latino population during the eighties and nineties, due to increased

Girls in such courses under the rubric of globalization is not, perhaps, so much a representative trend yet but an indication of the awareness that a shift in the framing of such texts must take place. However, such a shift by no means exhibits a desire on the part of literary studies to displace entirely the particular U.S. national framework for a more global one—or at least not in the case of *García Girls*. For the study of this novel stays largely within the various categories of American literature.

In what follows I will show why this novel is more readily accepted as a work of American literature as compared to Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters*, a novel that also tends to be read within the purview of postcolonial studies.²⁰ But first some closer attention to Alvarez's novel is needed.

The novel tells the story of the García family, specifically the father, Carlos García's flight from the Dominican Republic to the U.S. with his wife and four daughters Yolanda, Sandi, Sophia, and Carla. The story begins in the 1980s chronicling the life of the family in the U.S. and ends with a flashback to the 1950s and the circumstances along with Americanizing influences that led to the family's emigration from Santo Domingo. The scholarly attention on *García Girls*, though not copious, is representative of the common trends in Latino/a studies as well as ethnic studies in general. The scholarship on this novel for the most part consists of the kind

migration from many other Latin American and Caribbean countries" (www.sunysb.edu/complit/fall98.htm SPN 612.02/EGL 606.03). While the American Cultures course at University of Michigan mostly positions conversations about Latino identity within the U.S., The Latino/a studies course at SUNY, Stony Brook focuses on and seeks to theorize notions of shifts and migrancy.

²⁰ Since the curricular locus of *Dogeaters* places it in categories of American as well as postcolonial literary studies, dislocalizing tendencies of literary critics who attempt to reaffirm the novel's place within U.S. literary studies, become more pronounced.

of readings that focus on the negotiation of identity as part of the process the Garcías undergo as immigrants in creating a space for themselves in the US.²¹

Perhaps one of the more significant readings of *The García Girls* for the purposes of exemplifying dislocalism is Maribel Ortiz-Márquez's essay: "From Third World Politics to First World Practices." The essay is part of a volume of critical scholarship *Interventions: Feminist Dialogues on Third World Women's Literature and Film* edited by Bishnupriya Ghosh and Brinda (with a foreword by Chandra Talpade Mohanty), and is quite typical of the conversations taking place about the novel. *Interventions* according to Mohanty is the first in a series called Gender, Culture and Global Politics whose premise engages "the need for feminist engagement with global as well as local/situational, ideological, economic, and political process." The series also deals with what Mohanty calls the "urgency of transnational cross-cultural, feminist dialogue..." conveying the sense that literary critical practices must engage with the historical processes of globalization (viii, Preface). "From Third World Politics to First World Practices" is an attempt to engage with such global politics. Ortiz-Márquez speaks to issues of nationalism and displacement by asking: "How could one successfully write about Latino/Latina writers in the United States without problematizing the categories which are at the core of our own definition of national literature? How could one engage in a discussion of the "politics of displacement" and cultural dislocation without, at least, questioning the notion of the Third World and those narratives?"

²¹ See for example "The Bicultural Construction of Self in Cisneros, Alvarez, and Santiago" published in *Bilingual Review/La Revista Bilingüe* 23, no. 3 (1998 Sept-Dec), and "A Search for Identity in Julia Alvarez's *How the García Girls Lost their Accents*" published in *Callaloo: A Journal of African-American and African Arts and Letters* 23, no. 3 (2000 Summer): p. 839-49.

Ortiz-Márquez employs the key words in the vocabulary of globalization studies: “dislocation,” “displacement”, and “national literature.” These are, apparently, notions that must be urgently considered if we are to understand the current Latino/a literary production. Yet this exhortation to displacement provides a further consolidation of the very categories that she contends need to be displaced. Her questions are symptomatic of the way in which Latino/Latina narratives are employed to “dislocate” the categories of American literature itself.

As I suggested earlier, immigrant fiction provides a ready narrative that can help to re-situate the study of American literature. For example, in thinking about the *García Girls*, Ortiz-Márquez certainly pays due attention to the ways in which travel between homelands and the U.S. is important to the construction of identities. But this is considered only in the context of how immigrants’ cultural practices affect their position in the U.S. There is hardly any attention to the ways in which their position in the U.S. affects practices in the Dominican Republic, at the very least in the form of Americanization. Ortiz-Márquez’s essay is thus a good example of how critics can re-position immigrant literatures for purposes of dislocalizing the categories of the dominant national literature itself. Given “globalization,” one now needs an “international” dimension within which to re-locate the “national.”²² The “identity” of immigrant subjects is privileged not so much because these particular subjects have spent at least part of their lives outside the U.S., but because such

²² Though American identity has always been defined against the notion of “foreign,” such as English identity, in the present context it has become more urgent to define Americanness against the newer “foreign” identities such as Asian, or Caribbean allowing a place for issues of race and gender in conversations on multiculturalism.

“identity” becomes a unique site for that combination of the local and the global now required to reproduce the dominant imaginary of the U.S. itself as an “identity.”

In addition to Alvarez’s writing, Ortiz-Márquez’s essay also takes us through the work of Esmeralda Santiago and Christina Garcia, emphasizing the feeling of belonging in all three narratives. She says: “Belonging is the privileged feeling in all three narratives. It expresses the need to be somewhere where the boundaries of ‘here’ and ‘there’ can be easily defined, where the sense of estrangement can be easily defined” (233). But, though she argues against easy definitions, Ortiz-Márquez casts the “negotiation” of belongingness for these characters in terms of gendered identities, concentrating on how *female* characters negotiate their place in the U.S. through their bodies. If, then, such gendered identities appear vexed, this is precisely because of issues of assimilation *into the U.S.* Thus Ortiz-Márquez will say that “differences between male and female reproductive organs...translate... to differences in the way boys and girls are to behave once they enter puberty. The meaning of those differences is tied, in the novel, to Yolanda’s understanding of language and language acquisition *in the United States*” (233; my emphasis). That is, Ortiz-Márquez claims that assimilation through issues of language acquisition in the U.S. is “related to the configuration of sexual and gender identities” (233). The notion of the old and new worlds thus is mediated through categories of gender. Read within a framework of gender politics, *The García Girls* needs this connection to the protagonists’ homeland, because this can help to emphasize gender politics as an important *global* issue. Gender politics is indeed important, but Ortiz-Márquez’s reading, resting on binary oppositions between the Dominican Republic and the U.S., implies that the U.S. is, a priori, better at gender and racial politics than the

Dominican Republic. For example, Ortiz -Márquez writes: “the opening scene [in the novel] is marked by Yolanda’s subtle struggle to reject the norms established by her maternal family as proper ‘woman’s’ behavior and her ‘foreign’ approach to issues such as clothes, makeup, traveling, and friends” (236). Here she is suggesting that Yolanda’s struggle involves challenging the gender politics in the Dominican Republic and goes on to say that the “relative freedom she enjoys in the U.S. is clearly intertwined with the comfort she experiences in the familiarity of the surroundings in the Dominican Republic” (236). Though Ortiz-Márquez suggests reading this intertwining as a blurring of boundaries, she positions the familiar, comfortable, but, in matters of gender politics, less than ideal Dominican Republic against the perhaps unfamiliar, uncomfortable, but relatively free United States. This intertwining of experiences gestures at first toward blurring the boundaries, but only so as to preserve them.

And it is this blurring and preserving of boundaries that is ‘read’ most pointedly through women’s practices. When Ortiz-Márquez claims that Yolanda’s subjectivity is “torn between a corpus that was not quite inscribed in Spanish nor English,” she produces the following evidence from the text (in Yolanda’s words): “For the hundredth time I cursed my immigrant origins. If only I too had been born in Connecticut or Virginia, I too would understand the jokes everyone was making ...and I would say things like ‘no shit’ without feeling like I was imitating someone else.” (233). The cursing of immigrant roots is almost always depicted as a generational battle, and *The García Girls* is no exception here. The parents represent the old world and the girls the new, though as if caught between the new and the old. But the old world with bad gender politics here becomes both a way of differentiating the U.S. from other places and a way of providing

critics with a standpoint according to which the US is always already a place of better gender politics.

Here a politics of nationalism and displacement, inflected by issues of assimilation and dislocation, is equated with a politics of identity. *The García Girls* is used almost exclusively to reproduce the arguments of race and gender politics and to bear the burden of representation that comes with such discussions. Even though she wants to question what she calls the “ethnic reading” of these texts and even suggests herself that a “Latino” ethnicity is imposed on Alvarez’s characters as a result of migration, Ortiz-Márquez nevertheless produces readings of the novels that are in keeping with the American rhetoric of individual identity as one that one must negotiate alone. She suggests that Alvarez’s characters have taken on a fractured identity through mobility—which suggests that somehow those not required to be “mobile” can have unfractured identities. Though the essay acknowledges that there is a struggle that Latina women must carry out in the U.S. and in their homelands, in the case of the *García Girls*, this struggle is also precisely what gives them identity and implicitly argues in favor of preserving the struggle indefinitely so as not to risk losing that identity. In fact, this narrative of displacement alongside “struggle” is not necessarily a narrative of dispossession and can just as well be understood as a narrative of cosmopolitanism in which the characters are presented as possessing a desirable perspective that *could only come* from being displaced. Displacement in such analyses is elevated far above its material realities in the lives of immigrants and becomes a kind of ethical privilege.

Other critical work on *The García Girls*, such as Joan M. Hoffman’s “She Wants to be Called Yolanda Now” concentrate, like many other readings of Latina texts,

exclusively on the how the García family manage their lives in the United States. Hoffman says: "All of these girls—Carla, Sandra, Yolanda and Sofia—do come to some trouble in the New World... As the title of the novel suggests, not only words, but also the manner of speech is significant to the story of the García girls' coming-of-age in America. The struggle to master a second language is a constant reminder to these girls of their weakened position as strangers in a new land (21-2). On the one hand, Hoffman acknowledges that the girls suffer from a weakened position as result of being immigrants. Yet on the other hand she champions that same identity. The article ends with the following remark about Yolanda: "As troubled as it may be—by memory or failed love or fragmented identity or that precarious tightrope that is the immigrant's life—Yolanda still has spirit in her, she still has her art, her writing, her refuge. With that she will always be able to invent what she needs to survive" (26). Here Hoffman makes a case for reading the novel almost exclusively along the lines of the U.S. rhetoric of individuality and individual immigrant spirit. She concentrates on the what is most typical about immigrant struggles in the U.S., ending with the suggestion that even though Yolanda is in a precarious position as an immigrant, she has become sufficiently Americanized to realize that she can "invent" her own life. In Hoffman's essay we have a classic case of dislocalism. Though neither Dominican nor American per se, the very fact that it is Yolanda's "identity" that is foregrounded serves to keep the novel well within the horizons of the "unum" of "e pluribus."

To be sure, one of the reasons that the book has been so readily accepted into the canon of American literary studies is that it does lend itself to some extent to the sorts of readings analyzed above. The entire first section of novel deals largely with the girls

growing up in New York as “Latinas.” Such aspects of the novel no doubt encourage the production of scholarship that highlights identity politics. For example, growing up in the U.S., the girls rebel against what they see as their old world parents. During the girls’ teenage years, their parents send them to the Dominican Republic in the summers, in an effort to preserve their Dominican cultural practices. Yet the girls experience their parents as overbearing and overprotective because of these very same cultural practices: a constant source of struggle in the family. The resolution of their scuffles is described as follows: “It was a regular revolution: constant skirmishes. Until the time we took open aim and won, and our summers—if not our lives—became our own” (111). The fact that their skirmishes are described as a revolution seems to resonate with the title of Ortiz-Márquez’s essay, “From Third World Politics to First World Practices.” The “revolution” in the Dominican Republic concerns the political situation in which Carlos García (and by extension his family) were implicated in a plot to kill Trujillo and from which they had to eventually flee. The “revolution” in the U.S. is about the girls being able to stay out late at night and be able to go to school dances. It is precisely the fact that these teenage scuffles are presented within the context of old/new world, as the García girls try to figure out their places in their new environment, that lends the novel to readings that can extract and trace women’s identity formation and assertion as both outside the patriarchal old world *and outside* a dominant oppressive new world.²³ More importantly, it is the concept of immigration that places the book in a position to repudiate old world politics just as immigrants are seen to repudiate their homelands in

²³ Generational conflict is a rather old theme in immigrant narratives. For example, Aniza Yezierska’s work in the 1920s depicts the parent’s “old ways” as clearly a result of their experience in Eastern Europe which is then placed against the what is presented as the newer and more Americanized ways of the children.

search of a better living in the U.S. Yet they are expected to have the freedom in the U.S. to preserve those old world cultural practices. Furthermore, it is precisely through these teenage fights that the urgency of cultural preservation—and women’s need to be bearers of this preservation—is conveyed. That is, we have here a “critical” discourse that on the one hand demands the preservation of Latino culture and yet at the same time is able to argue for the need for women to be outside of it. The revolution to overthrow Trujillo in the Dominican Republic turns into the revolution of identity politics in New York. Never mind here the fact that the old/new cultural practices dimension is the concern of only one part of Alvarez’s novel and that many readings of it focus too exclusively on such episodes.

Readings of *The García Girls* such as those by Ortiz-Márquez, Hoffman and many others in the field of ethnic literary studies fall into the dislocalism of appropriating the narrative’s global reference –it’s being a story of “immigration”—so as to make more credible and politically acceptable a local situating of the novel as “American.” Meanwhile, these approaches to the novel nevertheless remain, in a dislocalizing move, within the overarching framework of a multicultural identity politics. Either way, *The García Girls* is read exclusively in the terms of gendered and racialized identity politics—terms that effectively preclude other, possible readings of the book outside a dislocalizing frame.

Critics have produced narratives about *the García Girls* that are part of a national imaginary in which the U.S. helps immigrants, especially women, discover feminism, or simply personal liberation. This trend represents a kind of politics that seeks to diversify its curricula by fitting into alternative views without much threat to nationalist literary

paradigms, preferring not to focus much on the ways in which that paradigm contradicts such a politics.

As I have emphasized above, one of the reasons that marginality has become a coveted concept in literary studies is that it not only signifies a position outside the texts but also a critical methodology, one that is sympathetic to localized formations and quickly comes to the defense of cultural preservation and individual identity. Accordingly, even if literary works do indeed reproduce dominant ideologies—as, in some ways, *The García Girls* can be read as doing—literary critics will want to hold even more firmly to the notion of marginality because it makes possible a mere pointing to struggles over racial and gender identity within a dominant culture to appear to be a critique.

Still, in some ways the reading of the international dimensions of the *García Girls* into the terms of a U.S. nationalist paradigm may seem quite appropriate in the present climate, since globalization itself can be a seamless experience across national borders effectively synonymous with Americanization. And the U.S. does have, after all, a long history of intervention in the Dominican Republic. It is clearly possible to expand our understanding of the literary and cultural practices of immigrants in the U.S. by paying attention to international aspects of immigration. Such a study need not proceed from the assumption that it must abandon U.S. nationalist paradigms. Immigrant narratives can clearly help us to understand the global context in which immigration takes place. In this sense, *The García Girls* itself provides a place to examine some of the assumptions operating about immigration and how immigration as a rhetorical strategy often times works to obscure some of the U.S.'s role in producing the *real* phenomenon of

immigration. That is, there may be ways in which the novel itself, in conversation with the (im)migration experience, resists the “dislocalist” readings. I want now to investigate this resistant aspect of Alvarez’s narrative. First, however, it will be useful to review some of the historical specifics regarding Dominican immigration to the US.

Notice the way in which Peggy Levitt describes Miraflores, a city in Dominican Republic in her book *The Transnationals Villagers* (2001): “At the edge of town, the buildings end abruptly in overgrown fields... The countryside is overwhelmingly beautiful. A few hundred yards ahead, two sights unexpectedly interrupt this peaceful landscape” (2). One of these sights is a billboard that proclaims: “Viaje a Boston con Sierra Travel.” Telephone numbers in Boston and Baní, coincidentally beginning with the same exchange, are hidden by grasses so tall they can almost cover the sign completely” (2). She further describes the visible signs of uneven interconnections between the U.S. and the Dominican Republic: “Though electricity goes off nightly for weeks at a stretch, nearly every household has a television, VCR, or compact disc player. And although it takes months to get a phone installed in Santo Domingo, the Dominican capital, Mirafloresños can get phone service in their homes almost immediately after they request it” (2).

Levitt attributes this contrast to what she calls transnational migration. She points out that nearly two thirds of families in Miraflores have relatives in the greater Boston metropolitan area, who have “re-created their pre-migration lives to the extent that their new physical and cultural environment allows” (3). She goes on to say that “because someone is always traveling between Boston and the island, there is a continuous, circular flow of goods, news, and information. As a result when someone is ill, cheating

on his or her spouse, or finally granted a visa, the news spreads as quickly in Jamaica Plain as it does on the streets of Miraflores.” (3). Though Levitt speaks of migration patterns between two specific cities, she is clearly describing changed conditions of immigration.²⁴

There are a couple of points here that are especially worth considering. This transnational pattern is obviously made possible in part by new communication technologies. The more fundamental fact, however, is that Dominicans must think about how to “keep their feet in both worlds” not only in terms of cultural identity, as older immigrants had to do, but also in the directly physical sense of being present in two different places with far more frequency than was possible or necessary for immigrants in earlier periods in the history of immigration to America. That is, Dominican immigrants themselves *live* a literal, material form of dislocalism that dislocalist readings and ideologies grasp only imperfectly and rapidly mystify.

Rather than in its directly physical experience, more often than not this dislocalism is described in terms of cultural patterns. For example, Levitt reports that Dominicans in Boston keep their attachment to the island by decorating their “refrigerator with the same plastic fruit magnets they used in Miraflores” (3). Migration to Boston then does not necessarily make the Dominicans reproduce cultural patterns that they once followed and now must keep because they are living in a new place where those patterns are threatened by prospects of assimilation. Nothing about life in the US is likely to threaten the decorating of refrigerator doors with plastic fruit magnets—a practice as common in the

²⁴ Though some immigrants in the early 20th century revisited and some even returned to their homelands, for various historical reasons, immigrant passages to the United States were far more definitive than their contemporary counterparts (*Transnational Villagers*, Levitt).

US, at any rate, as it is anywhere else in a “globalized” life-world. What these details suggest, rather, is the extent to which the lives of Dominican immigrants to Boston are lived in continuous contact with those in the Dominican Republic.

As we have seen above, insofar as the *García Girls* is made to occupy the position of a “marginal literature” that assumes a counter-position to the dominant categories of literature, its characters are seen—or made—to fit the more US-localized and “resistant” category of a Latina ethnicity. However, the book elides this easy localization of ethnicity at one level simply because the characters move back and forth and their lives are in continuous contact with those in the Dominican Republic, in precisely the ways described by Peggy Levitt.

Moreover, the novel resists any positing of the local as a site of critical opposition not only because the characters do travel back and forth with such regularity, but also because the local itself varies in different contexts. To see what I mean here by the variation of the local as such, consider the following: much scholarship on globalization that takes up a pessimistic view of Americanization around the world posits the non Euro-American nations as localities that can counter this force. On its surface, we can see in *The García Girls* how the Dominican Republic can be read as precisely that kind of locality in relationship to the globality of the United States. The opening chapter of the novel, for example, begins with Yolanda arriving on the Island on one of her trips from the U.S. and is first of the few chapters that cover the (reverse order) time period between 1989-1972. Yolanda’s visit creates many opportunities for various characters to suggest that the island is strictly local in relationship to the global U.S. Her aunts greet her by saying “welcome to your little island.” The cousins join in a chorus for her,

singing: “here she comes Miss America.” Yolanda, by the mere fact that she has been living in the U.S. represents the States to her cousin. Her family encourages her to speak in Spanish, which she describes as her “native” tongue, thus choosing at least for the moment to assume an uncomplicated connection between Yolanda, the Spanish language and the Dominican Republic.

But beyond this surface these easy connections and the creation of an uncomplicated locality rapidly fall apart. Consider for example how the novel describes Yolanda’s entry into her aunts’ house.

The old aunts lounge in the white wicker armchairs, flipping open their fans, snapping them shut... the aunts seem little changed since five years ago when Yolanda was last on the Island... Before anyone has turned to greet her in the entryway, Yolanda sees herself as they will, shabby in a black cotton skirt and jersey top, sandals on her feet, her wild black hair held back with a hair band. Like a missionary, her cousins will say like one of those Peace Corp girls who have let themselves go so as to do dubious good in the world. (3-4)

Aside from linking Yolanda’s appearance with a concept of the U.S. as seen from the island, this passage more carefully read suggests that the precise context in which the U.S. is seen as “global” is that of American intervention in its various forms, such as the Peace Corps. Worth noting here as well is the fact that while those in the Dominican Republic come to occupy the local position (the aunts who “seem little changed”) and Yolanda the global, in the States, Yolanda is also part of a different kind of locality, that of a Hispanic woman or Latina. In addition, if in some way the local can be the accumulated cultural practices in the Dominican Republic, how do we account for Americanizing influences on the island? By the same logic, if we designate the category of “Latina” in the U.S. as the site of the local then how do we account for differences of

class structure within this category, not to mention the differences of race/gender/language that give people within these categories varied access to the dominant sphere? Since the U.S. can claim Latino/a cultural practices as, in one sense, American, it can posit *itself* as a both a local and a global nation. Clearly, the point of view according to which localized cultural practices are always a refuge from the global and oppose the global becomes extremely complicated in relationship to the newer immigrant literatures.

If the negotiation of the global and the local in the scholarship on the *García Girls* works to reaffirm local ethnicities as critical positions in the form of identity politics, then what do we do with those aspects of the novel can be read as negotiating the global and the local in ways that resist localization? Aside from being concerned about producing the characters as good American subjects complete with teenage rebellion, the novel simultaneously points to the fact that such a negotiation of identity cannot necessarily be summoned to provide critical resistance to dominant cultures. Rather, the novel speaks to a kind of condition in which, due to the American presence in the Dominican Republic, thinking about one's identity in relationship to American cultural practices starts well before any physical act of immigration. Part of the reason that the García family has to leave the Dominican Republic is that government officials start to investigate the father, Carlos García's involvement in a plot to kill Trujillo. Victor Hubbard, a character who helps the family leave, is an American with an official post as a consul at the American Embassy. But he is "in fact, a CIA agent whose orders changed midstream from organize *the underground and get that SOB out to hold your horses, let's*

take a second look around and see what's best for us" (211). Hubbard's character emphasizes U.S. involvement in the politics of the Dominican Republic.

Aside from the clear role of the U.S. in the Dominican Republic that at least partially accounts for the family's decision to flee the island, the plight of the García family is symptomatic of how still other factors, produce (im)migration to the United States. For example, the girls' grandparents already live in New York because of their grandfather's post in the United Nations. But they also spend a large amount of time in the Dominican Republic bringing presents for the girls and thus prompting them to imagine a world beyond their hometown. Carlos too goes to New York often and the girls always look forward to receiving gifts from him that are "all the craze in New York." Even after the entire family emigrates to New York, they return frequently to the Dominican Republic.²⁵

Of course, it may seem only natural for the García family, given that it already has the money, the class status and the family connections required to be quasi-"Americanized" *before* emigrating, to do the logical thing and emigrate in fact. However, even those who cannot and will not ever migrate are also formed by this same kind of experience. For example, the American magazines and television programs available in the Dominican Republic translate into Americanized cultural practices not only for the members of the prominent García family, but also for those who work for them as servants. The servants also contend with ideas of their own identity in relationship to the U.S. that is again not indicative of critical resistance but rather exhibit

²⁵ Although the earlier immigrant works also spoke about the way in which the U.S. produced immigrants (David Levinsky says that in Russia, he was told that the streets in the U.S. were paved with gold), the passage to the U.S. for these characters was characterized as very clear and definitive.

a desire to be part of the dominant. According to Carla, the oldest sister, her mother Laura characterizes one of their servants as follows: “Gladys was only a country girl who didn’t know any better than to sing popular tunes in the house and wear her kinky hair in rollers all week long, then comb it out for Sunday mass in hairdos copied from American magazine my mother had thrown out” (258). Furthermore, Gladys dreams of being in New York someday: “‘I wonder where I’ll be in thirty two-years,’ Gladys mused. A glazed look came across her face; she smiled. ‘New York,’ she said dreamily and began to sing the refrain from the popular New York merengue that was on the radio night and day” (260). Gladys is in some sense already practicing to be in New York before she gets there and on one level it does not matter whether she ever gets there. That is, she too is formed by the particular environment of transnational migration.

The García Girls can indeed be plotted according to an American nationalist paradigm but that paradigm must find a way to acknowledge the interconnections of the U.S. with the Dominican Republic. The García family’s immigration is, portrayed above all as a byproduct of American political involvement and does not have much to do with fleeing bad gender politics or poverty to generous shores of the U.S. By not taking such conditions into account, and reading the novel—and immigration itself—exclusively in terms of a racialized and gendered identity politics, scholarship places itself in the dislocalizing position of appearing to regard such inter-connections, together with the current, less obvious conditions of the experience of (im)migration itself, as secondary to the identity politics/ multiculturalist framework that does not itself extend much if at all beyond U.S. borders.

Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters*

I turn now to Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters*, a novel that, because it is less easily situated within an "American" literary canon and also finds its curricular locus alongside postcolonial studies, gives rise to dislocalizing readings in even more dramatic ways than does *The Garcia Girls*. Its frequent appearance in courses on world literature and on postcolonial studies can be explained by the fact that the book is set entirely in Manila and engages with colonialism/ neocolonialism in the Philippines.²⁶ Such courses tend to emphasize issues of "transnational identities" and diaspora that are salient in postcolonial as well as globalization theories. *Dogeaters* is also often taught in courses on Asian-American literature and on U.S. ethnic/women's literature, in part because it is written by an immigrant to the U.S. and in part because the vignettes that comprise the novel are memories evoked by a character who has indeed migrated to the U.S., although the memories are retrieved through the embedded stories of the protagonists, stories which take place over the period of 1950s to 1990s in Manila.²⁷ While these courses may be interested in issues of migration and transnational mobility, this would seem to be so only insofar as the

²⁶ Consider the description of a course on Asian Diaspora as part of a *World Literature* series at University of California, Santa Cruz that includes *Dogeaters* as part of its reading list: "Study of Asian diasporic literature, attempting to discover and define a growing body of contemporary writing under this rubric, including immigrant/migrant histories, memories of exile and refuge as well as the fiction of imagined homelands. Examination of these writings against their historic, political, economic, geographic and social backdrops, focusing on themes and questions raised regarding gender, class, national origins, transnational identities, and aesthetics" (World Literature Advance Course Information).

²⁷ At San Jose State University a course in *Asian American Literature* explores "a variety of literary genres or forms, including poetry, prose, drama, oral narrative and screenplay from a variety of Asian American communities. The course reading schedule for this sample syllabus is organized roughly along geographic lines, starting with texts set in California and moving to texts set in places such as New York and Hawaii. While the second section focuses on second generation experiences, the final third of the course explores new patterns of migration, assimilation and narration, continuing the geographic focus out into representations of Asia and back again with first (and 1.5) generation representations of Asian American experience in California with which the course began (*Course Proposal*).

latter help to think about Asian American literatures, and the representation of Asian American concerns.

The fact this book can be claimed by two different, albeit overlapping fields, is symptomatic of certain trends in American literary history that have seen the merging of U.S. ethnic studies with postcolonial studies, and raises certain general questions about the relationship (possibly itself “dislocalizing”) between US ethnic literary studies and postcolonialism that I would like to discuss momentarily in what follows. Critics such as Amritjit Singh and Peter Schmidt suggest that we ought to merge the field of American ethnic literatures with postcolonial studies in order to understand the processes of globalization. In *Postcolonial Theory and the United States*, they state: “For those scholars for whom questions of race, ethnicity, and empire are central, U.S. studies in the 1990s has gained immensely from dialogue with the emergent field called postcolonial studies...especially in the school of border studies” (4). They go on to suggest that “U.S. borders studies and postcolonial scholarship are best engaged together.... U.S. ethnic studies, in our view, has sometimes been unfairly contrasted with the various fields of postmodern, postcolonial, and British cultural studies—with claims that U.S. studies tends to be more provincial and idealistic, naively stressing narratives of self-determination against cultural stereotyping” (4). Singh and Schmidt emphasise that the field contends with many of the same “concepts associated with postcolonial studies that have proven so influential—such as double consciousness, mobility, hybridity and revision; a ‘third space’ that is neither assimilation nor otherness; histories of coalition-building and transnational diasporic connections—have a rich genealogy in U.S. ethnic studies as well, especially with reference to people of

color” (4). Despite Singh and Schmidt’s claims that U.S. ethnic studies is beyond “narratives of self-determination” because it has appropriated concepts from postcolonial studies, however, such narratives continue to occupy a central place in the field, especially in the case of concepts such as the “third space” which is indeed about self-determination, finding a space that is defined neither by localized ethnicities nor dominant culture of the U.S. In fact postcolonial studies help the scholars of U.S. ethnic studies to pay attention to issues of transnationalism and globalization and yet retain the defining narratives of self-determination of identity. This much at least seems to be indicated circumstantially by the dual status—postcolonial *and* Asian-American—of *the Dogeaters* in literary curricula.

Of course some critics ask us to be cautious in this particular interdisciplinary context. In their essay “Crosscurrents, Crosstalk” Ruth Frankenberg and Lata Mani suggest that the term postcolonialism for is not quite appropriate for the U.S. and instead advocate “Post Civil Rights” as a more suitable candidate for reflecting on the struggles in the United States. Nevertheless, there are good historical reasons for simply acknowledging an overlap between these fields. As Frederick Buell shows, various U.S. cultural nationalisms drew from nationalisms across the world. “In America,” writes Buell, “immigrant and ethnic traditions have been marked by complex relationships between local and global contexts” (144). From World War II to the mid 1960’s, “cultural pluralism emerged as a powerful public issue and force.... Analyses of American racism and the failure of the melting pot were supplemented by advocacy of oppositional and revolutionary forms of cultural nationalism” that ran parallel to the cultural nationalisms across various parts of Asia and African during the period of anti-

colonial, national liberation struggles.” (144). Postcolonial studies more or less became a place to study literary production from those nations emerging from European colonization, primarily British and French. The superficial claim that the U.S., unlike Europe, had or has no formal colonies—in effect, a myth that ignores the history of the US colonial practices in places from Puerto Rico to Hawaii and the Philippines—is hardly a reason for excluding, off-hand, the U.S. from the purview of postcolonialism. And there is perhaps a case for considering the extent to which the U.S., as an imperial power in the world, replicates this imperializing, neo-colonizing stance in relation to those of its own “citizens” and (legal or illegal) residents that hail from former and existing US neo-colonies.

In any case, two things are clear: 1) that the combination of postcolonial studies and U.S. ethnic studies is taking place regardless, especially, in relationship to the literature that seeks to portray the recent immigrant and refugee experience; and 2) that the effect of importing certain concepts from postcolonialism (as noted, approvingly, by Singh and Schmidt) into US ethnic studies can, all too easily, become another opportunity for a dislocalizing move whose aim, simply, is to shore up the US nationalist paradigm in literary studies against the onslaught of the forces of “globalization.” This latter trend is especially dramatic in the teaching and critical reading that has occasioned *the Dogeaters*.

Much, if not all of the extant criticism on the subject of *Dogeaters* –work by critics such as Lisa Lowe, Rachel Lee, and Susan Evangelista²⁸ speaks to the influence of postcolonial studies in American literary studies. As stated earlier, this

²⁸ See Lisa Lowe’s “Narrative Decolonization, Displacement, Disidentification: Asian American ‘Novels’ and the Question of History,” Rachel Lee’s *The Americas of Asian American Literature: Gendered Fictions of Nations and Transnations*, and Susan Evangelista’s “Jessica Hagedorn and Manila Magic.”

novel is more difficult to situate within the categories of Asian American or American immigrant fiction. However, the very difficulty of this situating attests to how critical it has become to reaffirm just what “American literature” *is*. While critics such as Lisa Lowe do go beyond the critical standpoint of identity politics in the case of Hagedorn’s novel, there is much scholarship on the novel that bespeaks the dislocalist tendencies of the critics, not least because the placement of the novel in various categories of American literature requires an appropriation of more global aspects of the novel into a U.S. nationalist paradigm. I will take up this instance of dislocalism primarily through a discussion of Rachel Lee’s analysis of *Dogeaters* in *The Americas of Asian American Literature* (1999), because her treatment of Asian American novels in general, and of *Dogeaters* in particular, is typical in this respect.

Lee’s incursion into dislocalism becomes especially clear in her discussion of Karen Yamashita’s novel *Through the Arc*—a discussion that extends into her treatment of *Dogeaters*. Lee suggests that Yamashita’s novel is not an easy fit within traditional definitions of Asian American literature. She writes:

though *Through The Arc* is technically an Asian-immigrant text, reviewers have largely neglected to characterize it as such, possibly because its environmental focus and quirky, fantastical details appear askew from those earnest themes closely associated with Asian American literature—for example, biculturalism, racial conflict, generational conflict, and resistance to U.S. hegemony. Rather than dismiss the peculiarities of this novel as rendering it irrelevant to Asian American concerns, I argue that these very oddities makes it all the more important to read it as an Asian American text. (107)

Lee argues that it is important to Yamashita’s novel as an Asian American text and is indicative of the urgency with which categories of traditional ethnic American literatures need to be invigorated. Lee’s methodology is quite telling. She says: “I

situate *Through the Arc* in relation to theories of the 'Asia-Pacific,' analyzing the way in which the novel's global themes are seen to exceed the Pacific boundaries of the latter concept. Then I examine the shadow presences of Asian American themes in the novel, arguing that Yamashita walks a fine line between de-centering the theme of Asian identity and globalizing Asian tropes" (107). Here we see in full sway the above-discussed merging of postcolonial and American multicultural critique. And we can agree with Lee that this is indeed a step forward from the inward looking multiculturalist politics of much American ethnic literary scholarship, emphasizing "biculturalism, racial conflict, generational conflict, and resistance to U.S. hegemony" (107). *Through the Arc*, precisely because its relative lack of concern with issues of biculturalism and racial conflict make it seem out of place in a US ethnic framework, provides Lee with important material with which to solidify the categories of Asian-American literatures. She takes up a complex position here, one that appears to steer clear of an outright, mechanical opposition between "global" realities and the "localism" of US ethnic and, particularly, Asian-American literary studies. But by insisting that *Through the Arc* be read as an Asian-American work *despite* its apparent unconcern for this ethnic category, Lee sets up a more difficult version of this opposition in which the forward-thinking acknowledgment of the "global" becomes inseparable from "local," American ethnic concerns. It is not so much that American literature or any nationalist literary paradigm is dying or should be condemned to death in the wake of globalization; rather, it is that such a threat has to be reproduced and people have to be convinced that death is immanent in order for the rescue operation to take place.

This particular rescue operation signals that an infusion of newness is needed in the now fairly stable literary canon of ethnic and immigrant literatures. However, the production of the “new” with appropriation of categories from the field of postcolonial studies and the simultaneous extending of the range of the Asian-American to “always already” include the range of those categories is, in the end, a space clearing gesture that keeps intact the very categories that critics appear to be destabilizing. Threatened by the fact that Americanist categories do not appear to be holding up, Lee’s reading of *Dogeaters* is symptomatic of the attempt to cover over the distinction between the issues of Americanization and those of cultural identity—effectively reducible to the same thing. As Lee herself says: “With this discussion of *Dogeaters*, I also shift focus somewhat toward a work set beyond official U.S. territorial borders—yet not beyond the reach of American and Asian American imaginings” (75).

Lee begins her reading of Hagedorn’s novel by establishing the larger relationship between the U.S. and the Philippines. She states: the “textual submergence of the [U.S] militia’s presence mimics the subdued infiltration of the island by an American neo-colonial presence” (76). She then goes on to question any politics of identity rooted in biology, noting that Joey’s and Rio’s (the narrators’) ties to the United States are both “real” and imagined:

Reality seems to inhere in the body—in one’s bloodline [since Joey’s father and Rio’s grandfather were American]. Imagination, by contrast, remains a surreal exercise in recalling and repeating what are themselves reproduced images... Yet in accepting these labels unquestioningly, one is in danger of locating the ‘real’ in America and of privileging a Western site of ‘production’ over and against an Asian (and Asian American) and site of ‘reproduction’ (76).

At one point Lee does acknowledge that in the novel, “reality springs from Western seeds rather than from native self-invention” which “illustrates Hagedorn’s use of the West as determining text of her novel (i.e., after colonialism, there is no outside to the text of Westernization)” (76). But qualifies this remark to be able to hold out for the possibility of producing an outside space for the “native.” She writes: “Yet, the difference lies in whether reality is to be located in a Western implantation of genetic material—in a historical past—or whether it is to be located in the native’s interpretation and performances of Western images in a postcolonial present” (76). Lee is not alone in noting this interpretive and performative manner in which Hagedorn provides “native” characters with the narrative opportunity to re-invent their lives and circumstances. For example, in an essay on *Dogeaters* Nerrisa Balce comments on Hagedorn’s reinscription of historical events through allusion and parody.²⁹ Balce suggests that *Dogeaters* “challenges the norms of reading with its stylized, non-traditional form. The novel’s structure includes different linguistic and stylistic registers that signal shifts in the narratives, giving the effect of the collage of lives or stories” (55). Such observations are good examples of the way in which critics point to the possibility of the narrative existing outside of literary conventions. In fact, Lee while crediting Hagedorn for producing a novel that is inventive, takes other critics to task for demanding a more conventionally “ethnic,” identity-political realism from Hagedorn. But the terms of privilege in Lee’s analysis reinforce this precisely this sort of identity politics.

²⁹ Nerrisa Balce’s “*Dogeaters* by Jessica Hagedorn” appears in *A Resource Guide to Asian American Literature* edited by Sau-ling Wong and Stephen Sumida and published by the MLA (2001).

Despite her acknowledgement that there is almost no space outside of Westernization, Lee attempts to locate a space of respite from the dominant in the assertion of a native point of view. For example, she repudiates the recourse to a Western or American point-of-view in favor of what she terms a “native self-invention” and “native interpretation” – in spite of the fact that the novel stays away from these easy distinctions. In fact certain “natives” are depicted as embracing Americanization in the form of film, food, as well as other consumer products. More importantly, Americanization doesn’t just emanate from the United States to envelop Filipinos previously or otherwise secure in their own “native point of view.” Rather the “natives” or at least some of the “natives” are themselves quite complicit with Americanizing and globalizing forces in the nation—thus giving a rather interesting, not to say potentially troubling new meaning to the term “Asian-American.” Moreover, it is impossible to find a position outside of the increasing American presence whether in its military, corporate, or cultural form.

Some of the “native” characters in Hagedorn’s novel clearly have a major interest in producing and maintaining Americanization. Take, for example, the character of Severo Alacran, one of the most powerful men in Manila thanks to his ownership of the Metro Manila Daily, TruCola soft drinks, and to his controlling interests in multinationals such as Apollo Records and Monte Vista Golf and Country Clubs (18). Alacran even “tells the President what to do” (18). Despite her noticing some of these complexities, Lee’s analysis of the novel for the most part rests on pointing to ways in which “natives” reinscribe and reappropriate the imposed realities of Americanization. But Severo Alacran and other similar characters benefit from

Americanization and have no interest in opposing it either through cultural reinterpretation or any other means.

At various points Lee acknowledges that difficulty of separating the dominant forces of Americanization and “native” reinterpretation, yet continues to hold onto the possibility of alternatives to the dominant. For example, she points to aspects of the characterization of Joey (along with Rio, the novel’s principal narrator) as suggesting “alternatives” to dominant of neo-colonial conditions. Joey, unlike Rio, has grown up on the streets, does not remember his parents and has been raised by an adopted uncle who has taught him and many other boys how to hustle and steal for his own gain. These skills help Joey to deal with tourists as an employee in a bar. Lee does suggest that sexual relations in his work are embedded in “global politics and culture and that he is a “sexual servant,” but negates that by suggesting he may yet be outside of such a neo-colonial condition (85-6). He takes Rainer, a tourist, to watch shower dancers--a type of live sex show. And Lee points out that here

one sees the double-edged effects of stressing extravagance in the context of neo-colonial relations. If the native extravagantly has pleasure, his desire exceeds the framework set up by the gazer. This pleasure, as testament to the native’s self-sufficiency, has dual implications with respect to the spectator. First the onlooker might be relieved at how this pleasure appears to absolve him of guilt... Secondly, the spectator may fear the native’s pleasure unrelated to his gaze. (89)

Lee even goes so far as to say that “the sex show becomes a representation, not of the pure sexuality of natives, but of what of money can’t buy, the erasure of imperial relation” (89). Though Lee is clearly engaging with the portrayal of neo-colonial conditions here, in the end she does so only to reinforce ideas that are aligned with a particular strand of U.S. multicultural politics that seeks some sort of emancipation and

liberation in simply recasting a particular situation from a “native” point-of-view. She produces a reading in which the only possible way to counter neo-colonial forces is through a “native” cultural re-interpretation of the situation, unaffected by other, more material conditions. But the reasoning grows exceedingly troubled here, since, as we have seen, there are serious questions as to who counts as “native” and as to whether the “native” standpoint is necessarily one of resistance. Nor does Lee’s conceptual recourse to notions of a “Western” gazer and a “native” gazed and according to which the native’s own pleasure can go beyond this frame and re-inscribe the situation from the “native” point-of-view even so much as raise the question of how to change the conditions under which poor Filipinos must perform these shows much less carry out the “erasure of imperial relations.”

Critics include *Dogeaters* as part of Asian American literature in part because it is written by an immigrant to the U.S. And yet analyses of the novel do not explore this aspect of the book. Indeed, the fact that this novel can be catalogued as part of immigrant literature, suggests, if anything, ways in which patterns of immigration themselves have changed. Quite specific questions, such as how immigration is produced in the Philippines and how outright colonialism gave way to neo-colonial practices of, sexual and otherwise, become especially salient in the novel.

Lee’s contention that *Dogeaters* is not beyond the imaginings of the U.S. making it, in this sense, an Asian American text, works, on the most obvious level, because the novel is set in the Philippines, yet written by an immigrant to the U.S. Nevertheless, her analysis of the text tends to adhere to an East/West, Native/Colonizer binary in which the natives’ create a space outside U.S. hegemony,

giving them the freedom to negotiate their own identity. Furthermore, the analysis labels this as an immigrant novel only to reproduce the critiques that are found in more conventional immigrant works that depict a passage to the United States and the cultural clashes that follow thereafter. But if indeed *Dogeaters* is to be characterized as an immigrant novel then accounting for the ways that the book itself engages with questions of globalization and Americanization can help us better understand the current conditions of immigration. Much like the *García Girls*, in *Dogeaters*, the negotiation of identity does not take place *outside* of U.S. hegemony, but rather within a space already altered as a historical result of the American, as well as the prior, Spanish, presence in the Philippines. Nor does the occupation of this outside space *necessarily* endow its occupants with any critical distance or resistance. The novel in fact resists positing a Philippine identity of resistance against the American one. *Dogeaters* is not beyond American concerns—making the question of its possible inclusion within an American, or Asian-American corpus a seemingly ambiguous one—not because it foregrounds issues of struggle for native self-definition or because the novel is written in a way that allows people living on the margins to tell their story (though it may very well do these things), but because the characters inhabiting the world the novel represents find it difficult to leave those margins precisely due to conditions of Americanization and globalization.

To put it another way: there are economic, political and cultural links between the two countries that make *Dogeaters* a story about immigration even though the action of the novel does not, for the most part, unfold outside the Philippines itself. In many ways *Dogeaters* tells stories about Americanization and globalization precisely

as a novel set outside the United States. Thus, for example, the book fictionalizes the rule and eventual fall of Ferdinand Marcos, as well as the assassination of opposition leader, Benigno Aquino—"internal" political events inseparable from an "external" U.S. and foregrounding the actions of the novel's characters in such a way as to make easy distinctions between American colonizers and native Filipinos impossible. This specific feature of the novel helps us in turn see the historical connections between the Americanization of the Philippines and the onset of the processes of globalization that produce the kind of migrant populations and flows described, for example, by immigration scholars such as Appadurai and Sassen.

Antonio Pido's *The Pilipinos in America* (1986) provides a good understanding of how successive structural and economic changes in the Philippines and in the U.S. itself produced a population ready for immigration. For example, he recounts that during the U.S. occupation of the Philippines: "among the declared policies of the U.S. for the Philippines was the education of Pilipinos and their preparation for self-government. These were carried out principally through a massive education program" (49). "Books reflected Philippine characteristics," Pido writes, "but idealized American models, from the family to government and economics. Values and norms were likewise affected. To prefer traditional or native norms and values was considered a sign of illiteracy" (49). U.S. policies implemented through the education system thus produced desires that seemed unrealizable in the Philippines. As Pido describes it, "being an educated Pilipino meant preferring apple pie in a country where there were no apple pies and wearing American suits while the temperatures never went lower than seventy degrees

Fahrenheit" (49). Consider for example, how in a similar manner, Hollywood films help produce and mediate desire for American ways in *Dogeaters*.

The novel opens with teenage cousins Rio and Pucha watching a Hollywood film. Their process of self-definition is in some way affected by the Hollywood movie-watching experience. Rio says: "Cousin Pucha and I are impressed by [Gloria Talbott's] brash style; we gasp at Gloria's cool indifference, the offhand way she treats her grieving mother. Her casual arrogance seems inherently American. Modern and enviable"(3-4). This envy for American modernity then becomes much like the desire for apple pie, with the seemingly obvious conclusion being that to acquire such things requires one to be in America.

In "Notes on Globalization as a Philosophical Issue," Fredric Jameson has noted that "American mass culture, associated as it is with money and commodities, enjoys a prestige that is perilous for most forms of domestic cultural production, which either find themselves wiped out—as with local film and television productions—or co-opted and transformed beyond recognition, as with local music" (59). Jameson argues that this "cultural intervention is deeper than anything known in earlier forms of colonization or imperialism, or simple tourism" (58). It is precisely this form of cultural intervention that has led critics to argue in favor of preservation of native identity and cultural practices, which is by no means to be dismissed as necessarily an ineffectual standpoint of critique. However, not much is to be gained by understanding "native" cultural practices and identity as existing in necessary opposition to the dominant, mainstream (American) culture.

Lisa Lowe addresses this issue in her book *Immigrant Acts* (1998). She argues that though liberal discourse has challenged the reformulation of a “unified Western culture” these challenges “remain wedded to cultural paradigms...that still tend to isolate culture from material conditions and have yet to disrupt adequately the neo-conservative management of the function of university education” (39). That is, as one might put it, multicultural challenges isolated from economic and political conditions are not themselves in a position to make a structural difference. In effect, dominant material conditions themselves produce and consume multicultural practices. Certainly, for certain groups of people, struggles for the preservation of culture and of their culture identity constitute the only available space from which to challenge dominant structures because other forms of politicizing are closed off to them. But this fact alone does not make a liberal, multi-culturalist politics any less ineffectual if it is separated from questions of historical and material necessity.

Dogeaters presents American cultural domination as problematic yet circumvents the “nativist” critique. Though one of the narrators, Rio, watches Hollywood films, she also enjoys listening to *Love Letters*, “the most popular radio serial in Manila” with her Grandmother (11). Rio says: “I’m hooked” and also “I’d definitely die if cousin Pucha ever found out” (12). Therefore, while Americanism is something to be envied, Philippine cultural production is a sign of backwardness for some. Rio states: “According to my father, *Love Letters* appeals to the lowest common denominator... It’s the same reason the Gonzagas [Pucha’s family] refuse to listen to Tagalog songs, or go to Tagalog movies” (11-12). It is the branding of “native” cultural production as “backward” in relation to the (neo)colonial, metropolitan culture that understandably

leads critics to its defense. However, this defense can take on an essentialist form stemming from the desire to show “native” production as good simply because it is based on nationality, skin color, or gender.³⁰

Rio’s listening to *Love Letters*, for example, is not necessarily an act of challenging the presence of Hollywood in the Philippines. Nor does it signal Rio’s interest in arguing the merits of indulging in American films or even positioning herself outside of Americanization. Rio describes the experience of listening to the radio “novela” as a “delicious tradition,” and yet, sitting in a café after a Hollywood movie, she wants to run back into the “darkness of the Avenue Theater, where [she] could bask in the soothing, projected glow of Color by De Luxe” (5). The presence of Hollywood obviously inspires a desire to be part of the world that it portrays, yet a simultaneous attachment to Tagalog cultural production does not necessarily place Rio outside of that Hollywood framing. Notwithstanding the implications made by some characters in the novel that *Love Letters* is antithetical to the world of Hollywood films, its story line in fact highlights the same desire for riches seen in Hollywood films in its portrayal of the life of a wealthy landowner. Watching Hollywood films is portrayed by *Dog eaters* as a fashion statement, an imaginary enlistment in modernity, and a recruitment device for potential immigrants to the US. But a simultaneous “nativism” is not incompatible with this, nor is it a requirement that one ever leave the Philippines in order to participate in this form of “Americanization.” Consider the way Pucha reacts to what she sees on the big screen:

³⁰ Lisa Lowe’s reading of *Dog eaters* goes beyond identity politics and pays attention to the structure of gossip in the novel, providing models for a critique of immigrant narratives not limited to the axis of race and gender.

A determined woman alone in the winter, driving a big green car on a desolate country road, on the way to see her young lover... A woman like Jane Wyman baffles Pucha. Why does she choose to drive her own car, when she can obviously afford a chauffeur? (6)

Besides the enviable American modernity, the big green car on the desolate roads of the film so unlike the crowded Manila streets leads Pucha to presuppose a fiction of universal wealth in the United States—though she, in a sense, also re-“nativizes” this image by counter-posing to it what would presumably be a more “native” form of making a show of wealth: employing a chauffeur. And, though Pucha herself never migrates to the U.S., her life is continuously imagined in relationship to the idea of the America she sees in Hollywood. For example, many years later, after her marriage, she writes to Rio, who has since immigrated to the U.S: “I need a US divorce [sic] ... Well maybe I could do it in Hong Kong and go shopping too but I rather the US we could go shopping together”(7). Pucha’s desire for American things, fueled by Hollywood and by the fact of her cousin’s immigration produces her as a good candidate for immigration herself, regardless of whether or not she actually ever does so.

Consider, too, the *Dogeaters*’ portrayal of urbanization, which, as part of the processes of globalization and Americanization in the Philippines, also produces the internal displacement that eventually brings people to the U.S. Saskia Sassen’s study, *Globalization and its Discontents* (1998), states that “establishment of political, military, and economic linkages [of various nations] with the United States seems to have been instrumental in creating conditions that allowed the emergence of large-scale emigration” (40). For example, foreign investment that allows multinationals to set up operations in places like Manila also produces an internal migration that uproots the population from

the countryside and forces them into the city to look for jobs. One such character in the novel, for example, is Romeo Rosales, who has to leave behind his widowed mother and brother in a “tiny village in Batangas” (53). He aspires to be in movies but must make do with odd jobs around the city to support his family. Important to note in this internal migration is that in some sense rather than people immigrating from one nation to another people are moving toward cities to find work, a search that might eventually bring them to cities such as New York and Los Angeles—or that might simply leave them in the Manila sector of Sassen’s “world city.”³¹

Furthermore, heavy American investment increases traffic between the world cities such as Manila and Los Angeles and creates huge tourist sectors and service economies. Americanization of Manila is not only manifested and measured in the novel by who sees more movies, or by who (e.g., Pucha or Severo Alacran) has access to latest American fashions and music but also in character types like Joey, who are part of the tourist economy of Manila and have to hustle for male sexual customers in bars for money. A population ready for immigration is found here as well. Though it may seem that Joey does not benefit from Americanization and is outside of it, the fact that he is on the street and must hustle for a living are themselves realities produced by Americanizing forces. His way of life too is a product of both American military involvement and the global tourist sector in Manila. His mother and father (a black American soldier who was stationed at Subic Bay) are dead. Joey’s former lover, an American tourist, promises to bring Joey to America. He sends Joey a postcard from the Hotel Sands when he returns

³¹ Sassen explains that cities around the world such as Manila, and New York, Tokyo are economically, financially and otherwise more connected to each other than with other locales in their own countries. I will discuss this phenomenon in more detail in relationship to Esmeralda Santiago’s work.

to the States, and Joey adopts this as his last name and becomes Joey Sands. Joey dreams of being able to leave Manila and looks upon the tourists that he services as a way out from the fringes of society in Manila and to a life in the U.S. where he imagines he will not have to hustle for his next meal. Joey is not looking for an alternative to the dominant effect of Americanization that has forced him onto the street, but he is looking for a way of Americanizing simply to help him survive. That survival for now means stealing and sexually servicing tourists.

Although Rachel Lee may not, technically, be wrong in positing a kind of “jouissance” on the part of “native” characters such as Joey, outside the gaze of the tourist, this has no bearing on the necessity that drives Joey and others like him to hustle for a living, or on the fact that, gaze or no gaze, were it not for the power of enjoyment of the tourists who pay him, the occasion for such “jouissance” would not likely arise. Moreover, Joey’s mixed-race status does not place him outside of the dominant; in fact Joey uses it to attract tourists. He recognizes that he is considered to be exotic and outside the mainstream look. He says: “I learned early that men go for me; I like that about them. I don’t have to work at being sexy. Ha-ha. Maybe it’s my Negro blood” (44). Rainier, the German film director who confesses to Joey that he is in love with him, inquires about his origins: “Your father—he was a black American yes?” (146). Joey describes Rainier as unappealing. He says: “I’m not sure I can bear to see him naked” (132). “Poor guy probably thinks I am stupid because I’m poor and pretty” (132). Even though Joey says that he “takes advantage of the situation, gives his male customers the run around, and still extracts money from them, he is nevertheless trapped in the margins, and he can’t wait to escape (44). His marginality has no glamour here, it represents no conceivable cause for celebration. He

worries that he will “end up a shower dancer...” (45). Though his mixed-race look becomes eroticized within the touristic gaze and leads him to hope that his liaisons might help him leave Manila, there is no indication that will ever happen. Sexuality for Joey and others becomes a way of trying to obtain some sort of control over their lives, even if they must mold themselves to fit the tourist imaginary. Foisting on this character an aura of multi-cultural or sexual “otherness” that would somehow make it possible to situate him qua “native” outside Americanization cannot account for the simple fact that Joey’s fantasized escape from his hustler’s life is...to be able to emigrate to America.

The situation of some of the female characters in the novel is analogous, for example, that of Lolita Luna, an actress and mistress to powerful men in the Philippine government. Critics have suggested that since a good portion of the story of *Dogeaters* is told from the perspective of women, it somehow implies a more liberating role for them. (See for example Jaqueline Doyle’s “‘A Love Letter to My Motherland’” and Susan Evangelista’s “Jessica Hagedorn and Manila Magic”). But although the perspective of women is indeed an important one in the novel, liberation is no where to be found, and reading the lives of the novel’s female characters into gendered version of US-style identity politics doesn’t alter this basic fact. Much like Joey, Lolita Luna uses her sexuality (her only available means of making a living) to gain some access to the system. And, not to be deterred, critics make a similar argument in relationship to nationalist issues in the novel. For example, acknowledging that nationalism in the hands of men is corrupt, Rachel Lee sees an alternative feminist possibility in an underground opposition group led by Daisy, daughter of one of the senators. A feminist nationalism would indeed be a progressive alternative, however, Lee does not explain how the “alternative” in this instance is

anything more than a nationalist faction run by a woman. Whatever its imagined virtues, the re-inscription and reinvention of native identity does not seem to have any purchase on historical change. Nor can this re-invented identity be convincingly situated outside the dominant as a position of purported critical resistance. As I have suggested earlier, the novel resists positing a Philippine cultural identity of resistance arrayed against the American cultural dominant. The book shows how every part of history is connected to another and that those cultural and economic situations seemingly outside of the dominant are themselves also formed by the dominant.

The disassociation of cultural from other forms of politicizing is shown to be downright dangerous in some portions of the novel. For example, a cultural center is built upon the dead bodies of the workers. “Manila International Film Festival” becomes the First Lady’s project (130). “She orders the city and slums rejuvenated with fresh coats of paint... (130). In addition she has a new set of buildings constructed that she calls a “*cultural center*” (130). While the fresh coats of paint rejuvenating the city slum present a cheery picture of the city with the addition of a cultural center, the coats of paint only cover up the slums rather than helping those living in them in any substantial way. As the building of the cultural center nears completion, “one of the structures collapses and lots of workers are buried in the rubble. The [First Lady] orders the survivors to continue building; more cement is poured over dead bodies; they finish exactly three hours before the first foreign film is to be shown” (130). The film festival goes on as scheduled. It is hard not to read this episode in *Dogeaters* as a warning against precisely those forms of culturalism, whether nationalist in a more conventional sense, or inflected

by notions of the marginality celebrated in US identity politics, when they become separated from politics, economics and history.

Esmeralda Santiago's *When I Was Puerto Rican* and *América's Dream*

Like *The García Girls* and *Dogeaters*, Esmeralda Santiago's *When I Was Puerto Rican* and *América's Dream* – a memoir and a novel—are read and taught both as proper to an American ethnic literary corpus and as part of a critical and pedagogical discourse on “globalization.” Here too we may suspect dislocalizing strategies to be at work. Courses that include *When I Was Puerto Rican* as part of their reading lists serve as further examples of how theories of globalization are challenging some of the more stabilized categories of ethnic/immigrant literatures.³²

Such destabilizing has, among other things, produced the “border studies” branch of ethnic/immigrant literatures. According to the argument of Amritjit Singh and Peter Schmidt, “‘borders’ is the best term available to link the study of cultural differences internal to nation states like the U.S. to the study of transnational or diasporic connections in the context of globalization” (*Postcolonial Theory and the United States*, 7). Here dislocalism is pitched slightly differently: terms such as “cultural differences,” “diasporic connections,” “hybrid,” and even “border” itself clearly indicate a desire to adjust to the realities of globalization. Yet the nearly exclusive focus on culture and identity remains—bringing with it what is already an implicit commitment to stay within a paradigm of U.S. national literary studies. Santiago's narratives, which seem to offer themselves up as both

³² For example *When I Was Puerto Rican* appears in a course titled *History and Latin American Studies* at the University of Puget Sound. The course attempts to understand how “Latin America and the United States are increasingly tied through trade, immigration, security issues, and cultural influences.” Students investigate “Globalization at Home and Abroad” while exploring “1. Latin Americans in the United States. 2. Current Issues in U.S.-Latin American Relations. 3. The Environment in Latin America. 4. The U.S.-Mexican Border” (*LAS 100 WEB PAGE*).

“border” and “immigrant” texts all at once, provide a particularly apt context in which to examine this “hybrid” dislocalism. In most courses that require Santiago’s work as part of their reading list, terms such as “border crossings” and “geo-cultural displacements” and “border crossings”—displaces the erstwhile disciplinary language of ethnic studies.³³ In addition, though not labeled as immigrant literature per se, Santiago’s work is nevertheless appropriated by a discourse of mobility and border crossings that highly resembles the discussions around immigration and immigrant literatures. Even if, in this case, the border crossings may only be figurative, such courses provide good examples of how literary studies invokes the “global” so as to reinforce the existing location of itself as discipline framed by a nationally bound space.

This practice is evident in the scant scholarship that exists on Santiago’s works.³⁴ For example, Maria Szadziuk’s “Culture as Transition: Becoming a Woman in Bi-Ethnic Space,” Ellen Mayock’s “The Bicultural Construction of Self in Cisneros, Alvarez, and Santiago,” and Carmen Aguinaco’s “Creative Tension” all cast the protagonists in Santiago’s works as occupants of a border-space bearing hybrid identities. Ortiz-Marquez’s article, “Third World Politics to First World,” referred to above in my discussion of Alvarez’s work, also joins in this critical effort here, by suggesting that Negi, the protagonist of *When I was Puerto Rican*, is “able to posit a different identity” which is

³³ A course offering at the University of Michigan *Hispanics in the United States: Migrant Bodies Hybrid Texts* seems to attempt something similar to this. Listing *When I was Puerto Rican* as a required text, the course examines “contemporary U.S. Latina writings as border narratives and as literary recreations of the processes by which hybrid cultural identities are forged through geocultural displacements, border crossings, and intercultural negotiations.” This course pays particular “attention to the ways in which gender identity is (re)constructed in spaces of cultural hybridity and to reformulations of feminism by U.S. Latinas, what Sonia Saldivar-Hull has called ‘feminism on the border.’” (*Winter 1996 Course Guide*).

³⁴ Even though the scholarship on Santiago’s work is not copious, it resembles much of the work done in the field of Latino/a literatures and ethnic studies in general.

more freeing in that it is neither American nor Puerto Rican. (230). Yet Ortiz-Marquez does not explain why that new different identity is necessarily liberating. Aguinaco's "Creative Tension," taking up Latina writers such as Julia Alvarez and Christina Garcia in addition to Santiago makes similar claims. Aguinaco begins by questioning the very label of "Latina":

although [Alvarez, Garcia and Santiago] are all very different, as different as their accents, they share a common pain and struggle. Lumping them together as 'Latina writers' is thus both a disservice and a realization of a new people emerging in the United States--a new *mestizaje* (persons of mixed blood), a new people made of superimposed layers. Nothing is lost with each new layer. (34)

But here, clearly enough, Aguinaco attempts to displace the term "Latina," through metaphors of mobility only so as to reaffirm it with a different name, "*mestizaje*." She does not adequately explain how "*mestizaje*" is a more suitable term than "Latina." Aguinaco writes mostly about the identity negotiations of the writers, saying relatively little about their work itself:

Finding themselves between two cultures, some immigrants deal with their search for identity by shedding their "old skin"—just as earlier immigrants were (ill) advised to do—and by becoming "American." Others refuse to yield and become entrenched, somewhat petrified in their old identities and ways of being. (34)

In suggesting that immigration necessitates a "search for identity" Aguinaco foregrounds the more "globally" pitched idea of "mobility." Yet in her "border studies" mode, she, perhaps unwittingly, shifts the focus to one of immigrants coming to the U.S. and occupying a "hybrid space," such that in the end it is this hybrid space that is important, *not* the conditions of mobility that produce it. Aguinaco goes on to suggest that it is neither desirable to become entirely "American" nor retain the old,

pre-migration identities. She advocates a “hybridity” that is somehow both of these but neither of them. The evident suggestion in her article is that such a hybrid identity might make the search for the authentic even more pronounced. “In their novels,” writes Aguinaco, “most of these women writers journey back to their origins to find out the same thing: their true home and their true language” (34). But, in searching for their “true” identity, these writers “give us characters--particularly women--who assert their identity in an integration that is neither resignation to the reality around them nor an indiscriminate idealization of their cultures of origin. It is, rather, a syncretism free enough to be critical of all their different cultures--original and adopted” (34). But it is hard to imagine any form of “identity” that would not, in the final analysis, fit this kind of description, leaving one to wonder just exactly what any of this has to do, in the end, with the global realities of immigration and generalized “mobility” of peoples in whose terms the authors and texts discussed by Aguinaco were initially presented. In fact, the concept of “mobility” appears to drop out in the end, leaving the critic, in typical dislocalizing fashion, back where she evidently began: squarely within a conventional U.S. ethnic literary paradigm.

Dislocalism, however, is not limited here merely to questions of location. “Border identities” themselves seem to be both something abject and yet also, at the same time, exalted. At first, for example, Aguinaco characterizes existence on the border as painful. She argues that women writers from places as different as Mexico, Cuba, and Puerto Rico are called Latina because they share a common “pain and suffering.” But as she begins to search for an emancipated position for the writers to occupy, the very same border existence comes to take on more positive attributes of “syncretism” and “integration.”

The “suffering” of the immigrant woman evidently disappears as soon as her real border crossing is substituted by its cultural equivalent in the form of a hybrid identity.

The dislocalism here is not Aguinaco’s alone, of course. Her thinking here and that of many others working in this field imaginary shows a clear debt to Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderland*, first published in 1987 and still highly influential in border studies today.³⁵ Anzaldúa herself describes the U.S.-Mexico border as a painful place “where the lifeblood of two worlds [merge] to form a third country—prohibited and forbidden *Los atravesados* live here: the squint-eyed, the perverse, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulatto, the half-breed, the half dead; in short, those who cross over, pass over... (3-4). Yet, in becoming a place of constant flux and in allowing its inhabitants to re-invent themselves, the “borderland” suddenly also offers its abject inhabitants both an empowering and desirable perspective. In/on Anzaldúa’s borderlands the “half breed” gets transformed into the more celebrated subject-position of the *mestiza*. A cultural view from the margins, edges, and borders comes to be celebrated, and the borders come to occupy an ironic center. Anzaldúa writes: “As *mestiza* I have no country, my homeland cast me out, yet all countries are mine because I am every woman’s sister or potential lover. (As a lesbian I have no race, my own people disclaim me; but I am all races because there is the queer of me in all races.)” (80). Anzaldúa transforms the pain of non-belonging into what is itself a kind of universal belonging. Being on the outside becomes a privileged position. Metaphors of mobility such as “flux” and “cross-over” are employed to elevate marginality and enable arguments that do not themselves do much to change the conditions of those who must

³⁵ *Borderlands* is part of the required reading for the course on *Hispanics in the United States* at the University of Michigan.

actually live on the margins, or borders—a dangerous life for most, and to be celebrated perhaps only by those whose existence is safely established within the nation-bound space of societies such as the United States.

Even though Aguinaco and other critics include Santiago in a list of other writers labeled as immigrants, they do not engage with the conditions of immigration or consider the specificity of the Puerto Rican experience – one in which, technically, there is no “immigration” since Puerto Rico is, technically, the United States. This is not to say, of course, that Puerto Ricans do not “migrate” to the US, but there is a point to paying attention here to real nuances of this particular (im)migrant story. And, with or without its critics, Santiago’s work can help us understand a good deal about this, as well as, on a more general plane, about the processes of globalization that produce mobility both voluntary and forced. There are two aspects of immigration-- or, simply, migration --in the context of globalization that become especially pronounced in these two texts: 1) people are moving toward cities, and not necessarily toward ‘countries’ as such, to find work, 2) the experience of dislocation necessarily affects those who do not move as much as those who do, making them, in effect, immigrants in their own homes.

When I was Puerto Rican is the fictionalized memoir/autobiography of Esmeralda Santiago, while *América’s Dream* is a novel and plays with idea of an individual as well as a collective American Dream by naming its protagonist América. Thus there are important formal differences to be kept in mind here. From my standpoint, however, what is most significant about both texts is their treatment of significant aspects of migration that remain outside of the framework of border theories/identity politics. In fact, one of the most salient things to emerge from a reading of Santiago here is how much such

theories have depended upon an older, conventional notion of immigration as a definitive movement from one nation/culture to another— a conventional notion that seems invariably to be carried over into analysis that mainly emphasizes the struggle for identity in the United States. For this reason, in virtually all extant work on Santiago, movement from Puerto Rico to New York is framed, as if unproblematically, in the language of nation-to-nation immigration. However, Santiago’s narrative writing depicts a world that is far closer in texture to Appadurai’s characterization of the U.S. as a “federation of diasporas” and enters in interesting ways into conversation with Sassen’s account of contemporary, “globalized” migration as a movement from country to city, or from city to city, as opposed to a movement between nations in a strict sense.³⁶

When I was Puerto Rican tells the story of the narrator, Negi’s, family moving from Macún to San Juan and eventually to New York. Like the other narratives we have discussed, this memoir covers the time period from the 1950s to the early 1990s, depicting the first great migratory waves resulting from third world urbanization and industrialization at the onset of globalization. While it is conceivable to see Negi’s family’s move as voluntary within the personalized narrative of the memoir, what makes *When I was Puerto Rican* particularly interesting—and what I want to argue in what follows—is its indirect way of putting the personal narrative in the larger context of Americanization and globalization.

In “South of the Border: Hispanic Minorities in the United States,” Alejandro Portes describes some of the reasons for Puerto Rican migration to the North. According to Portes, “unemployment became acute at a time when modern consumption

³⁶ This is not to say that immigration has been completely supplanted by migration or that people do not have to negotiate political borders when immigrating.

expectations from the mainland were being diffused widely among the urban population” (117). In addition, “just as new products and fashions were pouring in from the North, the means to travel there in order to acquire them became available to the mass of the population” (117). Economic conditions became one of many reasons to “leave the island, and facilities for doing so were directly activated by labor recruiters, a practice that began at the turn of the century but became widespread only during and after World War II” (117). Plus rapid expansion in the U.S. economy created a significant demand for low-wage unskilled labor.

When I Was Puerto Rican clearly tells this story from out of the store of Santiago’s own particular family history. The family house in Macún is described as an extension of the outdoors and of the land outside. The house has dirt floors and chickens in the yard. Though they must buy groceries in town, the family also derives a part of its subsistence from eggs as well as the herbs and other vegetables growing around the house. Children’s movements from inside to outside of the house seem to flow uninterrupted. However, Negi’s parents fight over money. Her father Pablo’s prospects of making an income working on the land are significantly decreasing. Changes that signal industrialization and urbanization in Puerto Rico lessen the family’s ability to subsist on the land alone. A conversation with her neighbor, Doña Lola, shows how Negi’s surroundings are slowly becoming unfamiliar to her. Doña Lola says that after electricity comes to Macún, “pretty soon they’ll bring water too, and then they’ll pave the road and bring cars. And then the Americanos will come looking for *artesanías*” (55). Macún does not have to wait for Americanos to come looking for traditional trinkets for

things to change, they are already present securing investment and ownership in Puerto Rico. Negi asks:

“Do you know any?”
 Oh, I’ve known a few... You know it’s an Americano that owns the finca back there.
 Lalao’s finca? ...
 That finca doesn’t belong to Lalao. That man doesn’t own the hole to lay his corpse in.”
 “But everyone says...
 There’s a long way between what people say and what is. That finca belongs to Rockefeller... He’s going to build a hotel back there. (55)

Though the memoir does not make it clear if, how, and under what conditions the farm was transferred from Lalao’s ownership, the conversation is a poignant register of how daily life began to change as American investment and presence spread unevenly in Puerto Rico producing city centers such as San Juan that have more in common with New York than with Macún. The finca supposedly owned by an “Americano” is described as “stretch[ing] across the road to the horizon, the tall grass broken now and then by groves of lemon, orange, and grapefruit tress, herds of cattle, and in the distance, a line of coconut palms” (55-6). The prospect of a hotel on this farm is worrisome for Negi: ‘What will they do with all those cows?’ But Doña Lola is more worried about their own fate. She says: ‘you’re worried about the cows? What about us? Do you think they will let us stay here if they build a hotel?’ (56). As the land becomes more valuable for the hotels that can be built on it than for the food that it can produce, and the labor of its inhabitants loses all value outside of urban labor markets, “people” become as expendable as, indeed, perhaps more expendable than, cows. One must move, not because the order per se is given, but because the ground under one’s feet has changed its economic form.

However, this forced mobility is often given the face of cosmopolitanism and cultural advancement. Monín, Negi's mother, considers Macún as a backward place, and this has the effect of making the reality of forced migration seem to be almost providential. As Negi relates, whenever Monín was tired of Pablo and Macún, she ran away to "Santurce, a suburb of San Juan, which by the early fifties, had become as much a metropolis as the capital... It was a commercial center, with distinctly drawn neighborhoods that separated the rich from the poor. Hospitals, schools, private homes, banks...." (37). Monín also goes to New York to visit her mother, thinks of it as a place of sophistication and culture, and wants to move there with her children. After she returns from one of her trip to New York, she seems more sophisticated. Negi says that besides her looks there was something new about her, a feeling I got from the way she talked, the way she moved" (189). She even notices how "there was pride, determination, and confidence in her [mother's] posture" as a result of the trip, and "her voice assumed a higher pitch that demanded to be heard" (190). For Negi this transformation in her mother is both frightening and enthralling.

New York outshines San Juan for the aspiring urbanite Monín, although, in effect, both are the same distance from Macún: for, after all, one need not travel all the way to New York to acquire a sophisticated look and attitude. "America" is, in this sense, already present on the island in the form of urbanization itself. Even the countryside of Macún is not immune from this. Negi relates how experts from "San Juan and the United Estates would teach [the] mothers all about proper nutrition and hygiene, so that we would grow up as tall and strong as Dick, Jane, and Sally, the Americanitos in our Primers" (64). The experts came with "colorful charts on portable easels" (64). A

woman whispers in response to one of the experts explaining about tooth care: “If I have to spend that much time on my teeth... I won’t get any work done around the house.” (65). The food expert’s lecture on nutrition illustrates the process of changing ideologies in action. Negi says that on the “chart there were carrots and broccoli, iceberg lettuce, apples, pears... The bread was sliced into a perfect square, unlike the long loaves Papi brought home... There was no rice on the chart, no beans, no salted codfish...” (66). Doña Lola objects to this: ‘none of the fruits or vegetables on your chart grow in Puerto Rico’ (66). The expert’s response, ‘then you must substitute our recommendations with your native foods,’ left everyone confused (66). At the end of the session everyone received a bag of groceries: “tins of peanut butter, two boxes of cornflakes, cans of fruit cocktails,... grape jelly and pickles” (68). Negi explains: “Mami says ‘we’ll save this... so we can eat like Americanos...” (68). These sorts of programs in effect come to the countryside, not to convince people of the better life to be had in the city, but to convince them that no other life is possible, or, at least, desirable.

The story of Pablo and Monín, Negi’s parents, is revealing in this context. Monín’s desire to be an “Americana” and Pablo’s inability to earn an income –both, in some sense, the direct outcomes of an early form of globalization—create special tensions between the two of them. Pablo is often irritated by Monín’s resentful gravitation towards cosmopolitanism. He says: “Do you think I like hearing you complain all the time? Or that I want to hear about how much you hate it here, and how much better life was in San Juan, and how backward Macún is? I’m sick of it.”(24) Such fights lead to their estrangement, with Pablo taking up with and having a daughter with another woman (Provi). But the significant fact here is that, though he dislikes Monín’s

desire for urbanism, he too, in his way, reacts and adapts to the forces of Americanizing urbanization. Macun may or not be backward—the point is that, living there, Pablo cannot earn his living. In Monín's eyes, Pablo's weaknesses as a husband are associated with his lack of imagined cosmopolitan virtues. However, there are aspects to his character that the family can only glimpse, aspects that speak to Pablo's own experience of the underlying conditions of 'mobility.' As Negi tells us, "he had converted what used to be a tool shed into his private world, with a padlock on the door" (191). Once Negi "sneaked into his spice-scented hideaway and rifled through a stack of Rosicrucian literature and a book by Nostradamus" (191). These do not suggest the portrait of a stubborn, backward "native" with no interests apart from dissolute womanizing. The memoir hints, in fact, that Pablo refuses to go to New York because of his ideological enlistment in the cultural nationalist movement centered on the figure of the "jíbaro"—Puerto Rican for peasant or country bumpkin, but equally a romanticized and mythical figure of the Puerto Rican, quintessentially a man of the soil. Negi tells us that "although the songs and poems of the jíbaros chronicled a life of struggle and hardship, their message was that jíbaros were rewarded by a life of independence and contemplation, a closeness to nature coupled with a respect for intractability, and a deeply rooted and proud nationalism." (12). The local island folklore associated with the "jíbaro," is as much, if not more the province of city dwellers in Puerto Rico (and its diaspora) and, as the memoir relates, is required reading at every grade level in public schools. (12). Pablo's possible identification with this figure would place him in superficial antagonism to Monín's Americanizing cosmopolitanism, but not in a way that would make him any less a product of a modernizing globalization. Identification with

the “jībaro” clearly occurs from a standpoint of those already situated in the cities. Negi herself betrays this ambiguity. She says that she “wanted to be a jibara more than anything in the world but Mami said [she] couldn’t because [she] was born in the city where jībaros were mocked for their unsophisticated customs and peculiar dialect. My own grandparents whom I was to respect as well as love were said to be jībaros. But I couldn’t be one, nor was I to call anyone, lest they be offended... But there was no arguing with Mami, who in those days, was always right” (13). Negi’s longing for a “jībaro” identity reflects what is already her configuration as a subject within a space of American influenced urbanization and sophistication. Her incipient cultural nationalism, along with her father’s, makes her as likely a candidate for emigration as her mother is.

Part of the discourse of sophistication is the expectation that the lives of would-be immigrants are going to change tremendously simply by being lived in New York. During the car ride from the airport to her house in New York, Negi’s grandmother notices that her granddaughter’s eyes are popping out of her head.” Her mother teases: “that’s because the streets are not paved with gold, like she thought” (217). But, Negi says, “Mami was wrong, I didn’t expect the streets of New York to be paved with gold, but I did expect them to be bright and cheerful, clean, lively. Instead they were dark, forbidding, empty, hard” (217-8). But notice how “New York” here is being held to a (disappointed) standard that is itself already quasi-urbane in character. Puerto Ricans don’t necessarily believe in gold-paved streets. But life in New York is supposed to be better—better than the already semi-urbanized, pre-migratory life lived in a global periphery like Macún. It is precisely this dimension of things that is missed by dislocalizing identity-focused readings, which in a sense take up the flip-side of the

“paved with gold” myth, namely, that life for immigrant – read “ethnic”—minorities in the US metropolis is a universally sinister one in which the immigrant becomes the abject but exalted border dweller imagined by Anzaldúa. While Negi’s memoirs do on some level present her life as changed dramatically simply by being in New York—she goes on to attend Harvard University and joins the ranks of the bourgeoisie, albeit struggling to fit in along the way—in *América’s Dream* this transition is hardly noticeable. In fact the latter is in some ways more indicative of the kind of mobility that is produced by the pull of globalizing forces.

At one level, it is possible to read the family’s (im)migration to New York in *When I was Puerto Rican* as voluntary. In contrast, América, the protagonist-narrator of *América’s Dream* (set entirely in the 1990s), is on the run from an abusive and possessive lover. For her the move becomes a necessity—a fact that may, initially, work to obscure the less obvious set of connections that make her journey a consequence of what is already a direct form of Americanization in Puerto Rico. América is a young woman who has a relationship with an abusively possessive and jealous man, Correa, in the off-shore Puerto Rican island of Vieques. Correa is married to another woman and has children with her. And he also has a daughter, Rosalinda, with América. In leaving Correa, América must also leave behind Rosalinda. She lives in fear of Correa in New York as much as in Vieques, and, indeed, Correa eventually comes looking for América at the house of the couple who employ her as a domestic servant. She ends up killing Correa and eventually gains some recognition for standing up to her abusive lover thanks to a few appearances on talk shows. If read exclusively as a story of feminine resistance to violent male abuse, true enough, *America’s Dream* could sustain an interpretation

along metropolitan feminist lines, one in which the more complex, less “identity”-pitched aspects of globalization are overlooked. America is, however briefly, a heroine in New York, where the police, unlike on Vieques, come to her aid when she is being stalked by Correa.

But there is more to the story than this. How América’s life changes after she migrates to New York is a much more muddled question than the providential tale of her deliverance from her abuser would let on. América also moves from a place where location implies, almost without exception, dispossession, to a place where the division between the two is no longer clearly marked by state or national boundaries. The movement from Puerto Rico to New York is, on one level, merely a move within what is already a globalized service economy. On Vieques, América works in a tourist hotel as a maid. Here she meets families on vacation from the States, among them the Leveretts, who subsequently invite her to work in their house in New York as a live-in nanny. Here her work hours increase, and she does the same kind of work, only more of it. She also seems to have lost the freedom to change jobs, and must convince herself that life has indeed changed for the better because she has come to New York. “I am América Gonzalez,” she tells herself “the same woman who fifteen days ago folded her maid’s uniform and put it on the bottom of an empty dresser, in case she needs it again” (182). Then “she chides herself for forgetting that her life now is the same life she brought with her” (182). América continues, “just because I’m driving around in an almost new Volvo and I live in a big house and I can take a train into the city... But it’s different, she argues with herself, it’s different. For the first time, I can remember I’m in control. I couldn’t say that two weeks ago” (182). Note that the “difference” here is ambiguous—some

things *are* better, some are worse—but in no sense a matter of a new cultural identity, whether “hybrid” or not. At one point she becomes resentful and asks Karen Leverett for a raise. The latter replies: ‘You’ve only worked with us for three months. You get a raise after a year, as we agreed.’ América argues: ‘I know you say I work eight hours, [but] I work more than eight hours.’ Karen refuses to believe her: ‘How can that be? The children are in school most of the day... You just need to be more efficient.’ To this América replies “‘okie’ not because she agrees but because she’s angry and doesn’t know what to do with her anger” (255-6). Coming to New York for her does not mean having to assume a new identity, at least not necessarily one all that different from the one “back home.” It means having to be more “efficient”—or inefficient and angry.

At the end of the novel, after she has killed Correa, the Leveretts replace her, and América finds another job in New York as a hotel maid. She finds it hard to “be cooped up inside all day” (322). Thus, despite América’s “fifteen minute of fame” on radio and television talk shows thanks to her sensationalized killing-in-self-defense of her abuser, the end of the novel finds her in a very similar position to the one she was in at the outset. She says that the hotel she works for in New York is “so quiet that a guest can sneak up on you before you know they’re there. But they don’t. Guests don’t sneak up on maids. They mostly ignore her. They don’t even see her half the time” (37). This is not much different from her experience in the tourist hotel in Vieques, where “the tourists at La Casa del Francés who bother to notice her are greeted with a bright smile and shy chocolate eyes... ‘Everyone on this island is so friendly,’ they say to one another, then forget her the minute they step into the bright tropical sun... (37). In the U.S. América still goes unnoticed and has difficulty finding any other type of employment. To be sure,

her life changes as a result of her emigration to New York: she is free of Correa at last, though, since Correa can come to New York on a moment's notice, this has required of her a desperate act. But, once "liberated," her life goes on as before, and much as it might have done had she remained on Vieques. How, then, does being a "Latina" shape this life? Here Santiago's novel is especially revelatory. As a worker restricted to the low-wage service economy, América meets many other women from places such as the Dominican Republic and Guatemala. She often meets them when they, who also work as maids and nannies, take the children to the park. Placing the blame for her situation entirely on América, one such Latina acquaintance, Adela, asks, 'Why would you work interna if you're Americana?'" (219). América replies: 'No I'm Puerto Rican, but I am a citizen' (219). Adela doesn't understand the distinction: 'If I were Americana like you, I'd be able to practice my trade as a nurse. I told you I was a nurse in Guatemala, didn't I?' Other maids have difficulty comprehending why América's situation would be similar to theirs simply because she is a citizen. When she protests, saying "'I don't mind the work I do,' 'they seem horrified, as if her American citizenship entitles her to aspire to greater things'" (219). That is, in relating to her as another Latina, her service economy and casual labor co-workers see in her just an anomaly. This condition is rarely accounted for by "border studies" or notions of hybridity and cultural syncretism.

The rebuke implicit in the punning title of Santiago's novel speaks to these ambiguities as well. América does not get her "dream" of having a "houseful of children" in New York, and yet, in a sinister sense, she does. But they are other people's children. In the U.S., América is what she was in Vieques, minus the most immediate and brutal entanglements of *machismo*. The "dream" is the chance to go on dreaming,

more freely but with less hope. Describing this very particular form of immigrant existence, in the age of “federated diasporas” and “global cities” in the terms of an identity politics, whether old-fashioned cultural nationalist or ‘hybridized,’ seems to leave its most unsuspected circumstances untouched. América lives the dislocation of which dislocalism only adopts the form, not the substance. Her journey marks all the contemporary paradoxes that inhabit the notion of citizenship in a global era: being a citizen entitles her to the protection of the law... and to the gibes of her more harried immigrant coworkers.

Conclusion

The pressure on critics, readers and teachers of immigrant/ethnic literatures to displace their field in the face of the pressures of globalization produces what we analyzed above, in differing contexts, as dislocalist tendencies. Reading “immigration” as primarily a process affecting identity-formation produces certain valid insights, but leaves many questions unanswered. In the end, the various instances of dislocalism we have examined above are unable to address the complexities of the works they are studying simply because they are more concerned with re-situating securely their own disciplinary loci. But the question still remains: what are the implications for disciplinary practices as we engage the theories of globalization? Does the fact that categories such as immigrant/ethnic have come under careful scrutiny by critics such as Sassen and Appadurai mean that those categories ought to be displaced in favor of new ones? As I have shown, questioning nationalist paradigms, stable identities, and notions of immigration linked to these ideas does not necessarily mean that we should abandon them. But it does seem to me fruitful to read the texts, especially the contemporary

narratives of “immigration,” for the ways that they themselves push beyond accepted wisdom, old and new, and discover on their own terms contemporary historical and social processes. Whatever else they show, texts such as those I have discussed should dispel the notions that cultural identity politics can be a refuge from and provide critical resistance to globalizing forces in contemporary conditions. Work produced under the categories of immigrant/ethnic literary studies becomes much more nuanced when it accounts for how texts both produce and are produced by the ideas such immigration, cultural identity, globalization.

CHAPTER 3 RE-DRAWING THE BOUNDARIES: AMERICAN TRAVEL WRITING

The End of Travel?

“When travelers, old and young, get together and talk turns to their journeys, there is usually an argument put forward by older ones that there was a time in the past—fifty, sixty years ago, though some say less—when this planet was ripe for travel. Then, the world was innocent, undiscovered and full of possibility,” remarks Paul Theroux in his 1976 essay “Strangers on a Train” (130). This lament, so popular in the genre of travel writing, through which writers often show-off their life of travels to the remotest places, is often about a nostalgia for a bygone era when the elite travelers enjoyed more privileges. Significantly, the lament seems to speak even more loudly than ever today to a contemporary world in which space has become compressed through time. David Harvey defines this condition as produced by “the differential powers of geographical mobility for capital and labour have not remained constant over time, nor are they evenly available for capital and labour” (*Condition of Postmodernity*, 234). He says that since “space appears to shrink to a ‘global village’ of telecommunication and a ‘spaceship earth’ of economic and ecological interdependencies... we have to learn how to cope with an overwhelming sense of compression of our spatial and temporal worlds” (240). As a result of increased mobility and internationalization of capital, time-space compression expanded middle class mobility. Enormously increased ease of travel would seem to make it impossible for travel writers to “report” new places, people, and cultures

as, purportedly, their earlier counterparts did. Writing in 1976, Theroux was already trying to consolidate the act of travel, saying that “every traveler’s wish to see his route as pure, unique, and impossible for anyone else to recover” can be realized in train travel. He added: “The train is the answer; for the bold and the not-so-bold (there has never been a time in history when the faint-hearted traveler could get so far) that the going is still good” (“Strangers on a Train,” 130). About twenty five years later, this act of consolidation is even more pronounced; in his introduction to a collection entitled *Best American Travel Writing* (2001), he concedes that “it is not hyperbole to say there are no Edens anymore: we live on a violated planet” (xii). The remote corners of the world seem turned into tourist resorts.¹ The uneven spread of capital that has in part produced a space-time compression together with other complex historical processes have made it difficult, say, to represent an “interior of Africa” as a “dark” place that holds mysteries and intrigues as it was still possible for writers such as Paul Bowles (*The Sheltering Sky*, 1949) and Saul Bellow (*Henderson the Rain King*, 1959) only about half a century ago. The spread of capital, which in turn produces a time-space compression by reducing spatial barriers to different parts of the world and shrinking the time it takes to get from one place to another has several implications for travel writing. Descriptions of the surroundings in older travel narratives in which voyages were made by sea came alive when travelers reached their destinations and related exotic sights and peoples. But with

¹ The fact that the remotest corners of the world have been turned into tourists resorts is, contrary to what might appear, not a reason to conclude, as Dean MacCannell speculated long ago, that modern consciousness is that of a tourist (*The Tourist*, 1976). When MacCannell aptly noted that “empirical and ideological expansion of modern society [was] intimately linked in diverse ways to modern mass leisure, especially to international tourism and sightseeing,” tourism was well on its way to creating a service economy and has become an integral part of the project to repair nations by governments left devastated by the failure of development projects (3). Places like South Africa are a prime example of this attempted repair.

the reduction of travel time, the risks of the voyage itself diminish and exotic destinations can no longer be magnified by the uncertainties and tedium of travel.

Still, while travel writers may lament the succumbing of travel to pervasive global tourism, travel books continue to appear consistently on the best- seller lists in publications such as *The New York Times*. Nearly every major daily newspaper carries a section on travel. Numerous magazines such as *Travel and Leisure*, *Salon*, and many more contain feature articles by travel writers. The popularity of books by writers such as Bill Bryson and Paul Theroux are only a few examples among many indicating that travel writing is hardly a dying genre.

But does the anxiety over a “planet...not ripe for travel” anymore in fact contradict the continued success of travel writing? While it is true that a genre that has historically depended on producing faraway worlds for domestic audiences can no longer depend on the existence of these worlds in the same way, travel writing responds by engaging in a dislocalism all its own: here, the travel writer invokes the notion of the end of travel precisely as a way of preserving the genre itself. Thus it is that, in 2001, Theroux finds himself not so much advancing the idea that travel is still strong (as he did in 1976) but defending the genre of travel writing itself; according to him “it has become a label for many different sorts of narrative”(xix). He clarifies that travel writing “is not a first-class seat on an airplane, nor a week of wine tasting on the Rhine” but a “journey of discovery that is frequently risky” and “often pure horror” (xix).

This gesture of consolidation of the genre of travel writing in Theroux’s Introduction is part of a more general rhetoric of dislocalism within the genre. I will show how, much as in the case other genres that I have already discussed, travel writers have

always produced a national imaginary of displacement with respect to the “global.” But as they contend with issues of globalization—in what is, for them, its most obvious manifestation, the pervasiveness of tourism—they fear the loss of both the concept and the genre of travel. So they must articulate why it is that travel must continue to be a viable form of knowledge production in the context of globalization. In so doing they dislocalize their practices while producing and contributing to the rhetoric of globalization. I will explore the way this dislocalism takes shape specifically in three recent travel narratives. Two of them—Robert Kaplan’s *To the Ends of the Earth: A Journey at the Dawn of the 21st Century* (1996) and Mary Morris’s *Nothing to Declare: Memoirs of a Woman Traveling Alone* (1989)—are categorized as non-fictional that report the writer’s journeys. The third text that I will examine, Paul Theroux’s *Hotel Honolulu* (2001) is a novel. While most travel narratives are generally categorized as non-fictional where the narrator (based on the writer) often assumes the pose of journalistic reporting, a few significant ones are also fictional—Bowles’ *The Sheltering Sky*, Bellow’s *Henderson the Rain King*, and Theroux’s earlier novel *The Mosquito Coast*. Though the concept of travel is an important part of these works of fiction, they are not written in the writer’s own voice or necessarily based on his/her experiences. I will show that Theroux employs the genre of the novel as a contemporary strategy of dislocalism to preserve the travel writing genre in the wake of the various pronouncement of the “end of travel.”

But before I address the way in which travel writers in general defend and attempt to preserve the genre of travel in a time when, seemingly, travel has given way to tourism, it is important to note that the rhetoric of the end of travel is a rather old theme

in travel writing and has taken various forms. Historically, the notion of travel is replete with nostalgia and what Ali Behdad calls belatedness. In *Belated Travelers* (1994), Behdad shows that the discursive practices of Orientalism were a significant aspect of the European travel writing of the nineteenth century. He argues that since the “European colonial power structure and the rise of tourism had transformed the exotic referent into the familiar sign of Western hegemony” travel writers exhibited nostalgia for the loss of an “authentic other” thinking they had arrived “belatedly” (13). Behdad points out that the “belated Orientalism of travelers such as Nerval, Flaubert, Loti and Eberhardt vacillated between an insatiable search for a counterexperience in the Orient and the melancholic discovery of its impossibility” (15). Mary Louise Pratt further argues in *Imperial Eyes* (1992) that early European travel writers were in effect tools of colonialism. Even though they cast themselves as innocuous observers, they were part of the system of colonization and helped to produce a view of an “other” world that was easily dominated. So on the one hand, while furthering the aims of imperialism, they are nostalgic for a lost world that imperialism has worked to alter. Renato Rosaldo speaks in this context of an “imperialist nostalgia” that “uses a pose of ‘innocent yearning’ both to capture people’s imaginations and to conceal its complicity with often brutal domination” (70).

American travel narratives in the nineteenth century used the pose of “innocent yearning” in a slightly different way. American travel writers who described their journeys abroad took on the project of producing Americanness and American identity not only in relationship to the exotic other but also against the “evil” powers of Europe, casting the American in an innocent position as against the Europeans and thinking of

themselves as a benign presence. For example, in *Typee*, Herman Melville, for example, describes the “natives” with familiar tropes of the simplicity, purity, and savagery associated with closeness to nature. The images of nature and paradise are then placed against the French fleets that are, for Melville, symbols of colonization in the Marquesas. If the seeming impossibility of travel in the nineteenth and even the early part of the twentieth century could, as Pratt and Behdad suggest, be attributed to European colonization, then an analogous sense of impossibility in the present context can be said to result partly from the forces of globalization set in motion by a new, more all-embracing mode of economic and political hegemony that has come to be seen as synonymous with Americanization. Clearly, American travel writing must in some ways be read as marked by this phenomenon. Bowles’ *The Sheltering Sky* certainly has moments when its characters notice the penetration of capital, as when Kit observes encroaching industrialization in a coastal town of North Africa. But for Bowles, it was still possible to imagine an interior of Africa in which Kit could have a completely “foreign” experience such as becoming, virtually by force, the fourth wife of a Berber, Belquassim. And her eventual escape back to New York can be read as the return from a still-faraway world. However, in Theroux’s *The Mosquito Coast* (published in 1982) it has become impossible to sustain the idea of an “interior.” The protagonist Allie Fox goes to South America and tries to develop “Geronimo,” a society “outside” of the U.S. partly because for him the U.S. is losing its identity as it moves its production of goods off-shore in pursuit of cheap labor. It has become hard for him to buy goods in the U.S. that are not made outside of national borders. And, in parts of South America he is disheartened by companies such as Dole using cheap child labor for canning fruit. The

fact that Fox's experiment fails to create an ideal society immune to the effects of the investment and de-investment of capital, clearly shows Theroux to be in conversation at any rate with the idea that nothing remains remote any longer to a globalized capital.

Critical studies on American travel writing have made much about the adventuresome nature of Americans. Ihab Hassan in *Selves at Risk* (1990) for example, considers travel writers to be questers looking to connect spiritually with things and people in the outside world. Others, including Justin Edwards (*Exotic Journeys*, 2001) and Terry Caesar (*Forgiving the Boundaries*, 1995) have suggested that metaphors of travel and mobility are crucial to the notion of American identity. I have already discussed American identity in relationship to the concept of immigration, something that could, in some sense, be loosely categorized as travel. In his Introduction to *The Immigration Reader* (1998), David Jacobson, argues that the (often proudly proclaimed) immigrant origins of Americans makes their rooted-ness in the land a more nuanced one, more akin to that of a traveler. Whereas for most other nations, travel is a transitory phase, for Jacobson, America never really exits this phase, and is better thought of as a state of constant "becoming" than of static "being."

But a form of travel that connotes a Euro-American, male, upper class subject as its agent can also be thought of as the flipside of immigration, as its privileged and aristocratic form.² More importantly, if literary critics conceive of immigration as a voyage into the U.S. to secure culturally, spatially, and nationally distinctive American practices, travel writers use the concept of travel as a voyage out of the nation to do some of the same work. In this sense, dislocalist practices in the genre of travel writing are far more pronounced than in the genre of immigrant fiction. As I have shown in the previous

² I will discuss issues of gender and travel writing in relationship to the work of Mary Morris.

chapter, the category of immigrant writing does serve to shore up the discipline of American literature by dislocalizing it. Travel writers, however, appear much more invested in preserving the category of travel writing than their immigrant writer counterparts, if only because immigrant writing must follow on the act of immigration, whereas today, in most cases, travel writers travel in order to write. Hence the quasi-autobiographical aspect present in both genres assumes much greater importance in travel writing and is in a certain way inseparable from the genre itself. Though critics have produced a canon of immigrant fiction that is mostly written by immigrants themselves, it is possible to write about others' immigrant experiences and still participate in the genre of immigration narrative, but not to write about others' travel experiences and be a travel writer. Even if travel writers produce fictional works, it is their reputation as authors of non-fictional reportage that seems to bestow the title of "travel writers" on them. Consequently the anxiety of travel writers about the end or impossibility of travel has become far more pronounced, since it threatens to make their way of making a living obsolete.

I argue, in fact, that because great distances increasingly need not be traversed and national borders need not be crossed in order to see something "different," travel writers must try to recreate that sense of distance or risk now unable to reproduce what we might simply term the heroic narrative of travel. In other words, if the older travelers traveled long distances in order to see the "other," contemporary travelers must travel in order to produce the perception that the very space that has been progressively annihilated through space/time compression still exists. The production of this effect of space becomes a pronounced instance of dislocalism, since not only travel itself, but an

important site for the construction of an American identity is at stake. Engaging with those discursive aspects of globalization that emphasize homogeneity across the world in the form of “Americanization,” American travel books also preserve the idea of distinctive American practices, attitudes, and identity by maintaining the distance between the U.S. and the world through the concept of travel. Travel. Slowing down the time of travel, re-establishing the boundaries between the U.S. and other nations, and arguing the very need for travel writing itself are all bound up with travel writers’ own direct investment in producing the category of travel writing as such.

Contemporary declarations about the end of travel that function in effect to re-establish travel writing and to restore the space erased by the effects of globalization often consist of a defense of one form of travel over another as the superior one. To again use Theroux as an example, in talking about train travel he claims, “The train soothed and comforted me and stimulated my imagination... I had made a discovery: I would gladly go anywhere on a train” (*Sir Vidia’s Shadow*, 145). He had already declared train travel—his preferred form of travel—as “the purest form of travel, a combination of flight and suspended animation” in “Stranger on a Train” (126). But Theroux’s preference for trains because they have the effect of re-expanding compressed space, merely displaces the real problem, begging the question of what the different forms of travel in fact are (is, for example, commercial air travel itself “travel” any longer?), and of why Theroux should be invested in a pure form of travel at all.

Many critics have described travel or mobility in general (whether forced or voluntary) as a condition of the contemporary world, and many institutional boundaries

are negotiated through this concept.³ For example, James Clifford intervenes into conversations about ethnographic practices to characterize “fieldwork as travel encounters” (Routes, 67). He shows that when “intensive field work began to be championed by Boasians and Malinowskians, an effort was required to distinguish the knowledge produced by other long term residents in the areas studied. Disciplinary others included the missionary, the colonial officer, and the travel writers” (64). Though anthropology continues to hold onto ideas such as intense dwelling, learning local languages, and producing a deep interpretation as a way to consolidate its discipline, “the border between two relatively recent traditions of literary travel and academic ethnography is being renegotiated” (68). Clifford’s contribution to conversations about ethnography gives us a way to think about travel as a “complex range of experiences: practices of crossing and interaction that troubled the localism of many common assumptions about culture” (3). Clifford abstracts the metaphor of travel, using it to describe any form of “dislocation” or “displacement.” For Clifford, it is an “inclusive” term embracing a range of voluntary practices of leaving “home” to go to some “other” place. And though he acknowledges that the metaphor of travel can only go so far and “falls apart into nonequivalents” and “different translation terms” (such as “diaspora,” “borderland,” “immigration,” “migrancy,” “tourism,” “pilgrimage,” “exile”) he appropriately wants to hold onto the term of travel since it connotes Euro-American class privilege, a “voluntary” leaving (11). For Clifford, “travel” has an “inextinguishable taint of location by class, gender, race, and a certain literariness” (39). His emphasis on the idea that anthropology ought to pay attention to the ways ethnographic work is carried

³ Arjun Appadurai in *Modernity at Large* (1996) says that if people themselves are not traveling, “few persons in the world today do not have a friend, relative, or coworker who is not on the road to somewhere else or not already coming back home, bearing stories and possibilities” (4).

out through the form of travel itself asks us to rework the major concepts of the field, such as deep dwelling and intense interpretation. Taking Clifford's expansive use of the notion of travel as connoting almost most any form of displacement, we can see better how those generic and disciplinary practices that rest on the notion of travel as a form of self-definition must do the work of defining themselves in opposition to other forms of travel that may be too inclusive for these practices. Travel writers increasingly find themselves defining their practices as against what they consider to be similar non-equivalents such as those of tourists, ethnographers, Peace corps personnel, etc.⁴ With a need to see and to represent travel writing as an intellectual pursuit, they take pains to establish themselves in opposition to tourism. In addition, they tend to see their own work as more "real" than that of academic or travel writing. Noted travel writer Bill Bryson, in his review of Patrick Holland's and Graham Huggan's critical book on travel writing, *Tourists with Typewriters* (1998), ("Travel," Dec. 1998) shows that travel writers are interested in playing an active part in staking out their own territory. Amused by the fact that others who are not themselves travel writers would even attempt to comment on the field, Bryson finds academic critiques of travel writing entirely dispensable. He says to the reader "put this volume aside and go find yourself a real book -- perhaps Rick Ridgeway's latest, *The Shadow of Kilimanjaro: On Foot Across East Africa*" ("Travel"). Ridgeway's book is real for Bryson because it is an account based on what he considers

⁴ I will take up the questions of anthropological ethnography in more detail in the next chapter on tourism, but want to point out here that critics like Clifford note that as the practices of travel writers and ethnographers are seen to overlap in part, anthropologists' need to defined the concept of travel for the discipline's own production of knowledge disappearance of travel is not about its becomes even greater. Ethnographers have rejected the work of travel writers as frivolous partially because, unlike ethnography, it is not held accountable to the generic methodologies and practices of an academic discipline.

to be “actual” travel.⁵ In many ways, unlike the writers of other literary genres, travel writers see themselves as the exclusive keepers of the category of travel writing itself.

I now turn directly to the three works of travel writing mentioned above: Kaplan’s *The Ends of the Earth*, Morris’s *Nothing to Declare*, and Theroux’s *Hotel Honolulu*. In all of these narratives, dislocalism takes the following shape: intervening themselves on behalf of their literary niche, these writers suggest to us that since travel writing has always defined itself in relationship to the rest of the world, it is now in an especially good position to mediate this relationship in the context of globalization. Such a suggestion not only helps travel writers to argue that travel narratives are producing viable knowledge in the context of globalization but also to update and, in effect, to rescue the genre.

Robert Kaplan: “Actual” Travels and First Hand Accounts

In *The Ends of the Earth*, Robert D. Kaplan who writes on foreign affairs and travel, describes a journey that begins in Africa and ends in Asia, and whose purpose is in part to document how the processes of globalization affect different parts of the world. From criticizing how others choose their mode of transportation to the bad behavior of tourists, Kaplan takes up the notion of the “end of travel” in a variety of ways. The most obvious and, so to speak, instinctive of these is to defend travel as a practice through which a certain kind of knowledge is still to be gained. Specifically Kaplan says that his motivation for travel is to gain a first hand account of how globalization is now affecting

⁵ I will show this notion of actual travel finds valorization in work by travel writers, who use this concept to separate travel writing from others forms of intellectual production and simultaneously work towards consolidating national boundaries and asserting the viability of travel writing.

people around the world. Globalization, we are given to understand, is still an uneven process and only seeing its realities up close can make it something palpable.

But I will argue that travel for Kaplan, even on these grounds, is not really necessary to his “ends,” since without real exception his “first hand” experiences turn out to be perfectly congruent with the thinking of elite policy makers in the U.S., merely reiterating the already existing and dominant views about the places he visits. And in this process *The Ends of the Earth* speaks more to a pre-existing ideological drive to shore up the national boundaries of the U.S. by re-experiencing its national “others” as so many attempts, many of them doomed, to enter the U.S.-dominated global order. Since travel writing as a genre has depended upon travel from one nation into another and reports of adventures during the journey as well as in the destination’s areas, Kaplan stresses the importance of national boundaries in order to preserve the space of heroic travel and thereby the genre of travel writing as a whole. The difference between *The Ends of the Earth* and the genre with which it seeks to identify itself, however, is that its reported border-crossings are like visits to quarantined patients in a hospital, many of whom are not expected to survive. The end of travel is averted by traveling to witness what are, in more than just a geographical sense, “ends.”

Acknowledging one of the major premises of globalism, that nation-states are weakening, Kaplan proclaims that he sets out to verify directly the viability of nation-states. He states that the “first act of geography is measurement” (6). He further says, “I have tried to learn by actual travel and experience just how far places are from each other, where the borders actually are and where they aren’t, where the real terra incognita is” (6). Of course, thanks to the first travelers, there are now maps that tell us perfectly

well where the borders are, but maps themselves do not preserve the real sensations of distance, especially when these borders may be about to disappear, and so they must, it seems, periodically be tested by further, “real” travel.

In part, of course, Kaplan’s travels are motivated by fear that what is happening around the world may have also begun to happen in the U.S. For example he says: “Many of the problems I saw around the world -- poverty, the collapse of cities, porous borders, cultural and racial strife, growing economic disparities, weakening nation-states -- are problems for Americans to think about. I thought of America everywhere I looked. We cannot escape from a more populous, interconnected world of crumbling borders” (6). He also relates that two poor sections in a neighborhood of Adibjan, Ivory Coast, are named after American cities; “Washington” and “Chicago” are described as a “patchwork of corrugated zinc roofs” and cardboard walls where hotel rooms are “crawling” with “foot-long lizards” (19). This only works to remind us that the lines between poverty and wealth can just as easily be drawn between various parts of Washington DC, as between DC and Adibjan. So crossing boundaries for the purposes of travel writing becomes more complex than simply going from one nation to another. For example, he says about Pakistan that the nation has a “growing middle class that increasingly has more in common with its American and European counterparts” than it does with the rest of the Pakistani population (326). With the understanding that the negative effects of globalization, such as capital flight, are not limited to places outside of U.S. borders, and the barely acknowledged fear that such negative effects will be felt throughout the U.S., Kaplan’s travels seem to project and spatialize a desire to keep such effects away from the U.S., seeking reassurance that, even though parts of the world such as those in

Adibjan and Pakistan may have something in common with the U.S., they remain fundamentally distinct from a U.S. able to stave off such a degree of economic collapse. Kaplan's journey in part, then, becomes a journey about exorcizing the elements of capitalist crisis from the U.S. and re-securing them convincingly onto other parts of the world. In Kaplan's narrative, dislocalism thus takes the form of consolidating "crumbling borders" through the act of traveling. Traveling, more so than other forms of mobility such as immigration, exile or pilgrimage remains the better term because it carries a connotation of a temporary state, a leaving one's home only in order to return to it. And indeed for Kaplan this return to the U.S. or in more general terms securing the U.S. boundaries against the ills of the world is what has become the new—perhaps the last—purpose of travel. The metaphors of travel and mobility themselves become ways of upholding the ideologies of the policymakers.

In order to accomplish this, Kaplan (drawing upon the work of nineteenth century theorists such as that the German geographer Karl Ritter) employs the old notion of geographical destiny, that is, the theory that it is nature and geography that determine the destinies of nation-states. Those countries able to best control geographical and natural disasters, such as the U.S., are the ones that remain viable. And by extension those nations that have perfected American ways and know-how will fare far better than those that have not-- and will therefore not survive. Geography allows Kaplan to adduce "local" reasons for the failures of nation-states.

No longer a victim of slavers, Sierra Leone now became a victim of its location--a backwater attracting only dregs and mediocrities from Europe... The Atlantic that had once brought slavers and a rudimentary measure of contact with the Western World now brought almost nothing. Sierra Leone was a metaphor for geographical destiny. Sierra Leone helped [him] to feel what is it like to be cut off. (48)

For Kaplan *any* contact with Europe, even if it was the slave trade that had once made Sierra Leone's Freetown "a center of human activity," is far better than being "cut off." "The slave coast in Africa was ready to be re-colonized, if only the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the English would agree to come back with their money" (80). But being "cut off" is attributed entirely to a "geographical destiny" and a pernicious locality. For Kaplan locality (cultural or geographical) in Africa offers no respite against domination nor is it a repository for ideas that might change the inequities of the world. If globalization is to take effect then this will require in principle that all remnants of locality be done away with, if "geographical destiny" should demand this. The only locality that is worth globalizing is that of the U.S. since according to Kaplan it is the adaptation of American-style business systems and work habits that has helped national economies in Asia.

And yet Kaplan's travel narrative remains invested in the local in seemingly doomed places such as Sierra Leone because the effects of globalization within the US itself may be responsible for making parts of U.S. begin to resemble Freetown. Though at times Kaplan seems to chime in with the standard neo-liberal wisdom that attracting foreign investment is the only salvation for regions such as sub-Saharan Africa, the reduction of the local to the determinism of the geographical already implies the pointlessness of resisting the negative effects of globalization there. But then, if the US is threatened with a creeping "Africanization," as Kaplan at times warns his readers, might not this too be a question of "geographical destiny"? To evade such a logic, and to uphold neo-liberalism's providential narrative of globalization against what is unequivocally the latter's dark side in places such as Africa, Kaplan must resort to a

dislocalized form of travel: only a traveler's eye-witness knowledge of the faraway and the "geographical" could hope to "prove" the abstractions of dominant neo-liberal policies without raising the question of the latter's responsibility for poverty and inequality *everywhere*, whether in Chicago, Abidjan, or Chicago, Illinois. One has to travel to *see* geographical destiny erasing national borders in order, in the end, to secure, ideologically, the one border that really matters: that of the U.S.

But there are intermediate zones between Africa and the Euro-American West. Again offering first-hand eye-witness accounts, Kaplan cites developments in parts of Asia as proof that, due to their adaptability to and willingness to learn from the West, they have won the position of active participants in global economic developments. As in other Asian 'tiger' economies such as Singapore and Hong Kong, Kaplan observes the effects of rapid development in Thailand. Taking a walk in Bangkok he is "struck by the noise: the grinding, piercing high-pitched racket of power drills and jackhammers, along with churning ignitions of the three-wheeled tuk-tuks" (373). Moreover, in Bangkok, building and construction as a "twenty-four-hour-a-day activity," signals "many years of fast economic growth rates and correspondingly low birthrates that have worked to liberate Thailand from the horrors [Kaplan has] witnessed elsewhere" (373). By "elsewhere" he means, by and large, Africa. And he attributes this success to the fact that in Thailand "Western know-how was welcomed and then improved upon" (378). Similarly, a country such as Pakistan, also visited by Kaplan, can point to its relatively sizeable middle-class as a market for foreign goods alongside what is still a large and inexpensive labor-force, attractive as well to foreign investment, as protection against African "horrors." But what, then, has become of the vaunted law of "geographical

destiny” in these faraway places? Does the mere influx of money work in some “geographies” and not others? And why travel to them, if first-hand accounts only confirm what global finance-capital already presumably knows?

The answer, according to Kaplan, is that people in Asia possess far more intellect and ingenuity and are better able to control their “geography,” than the apparently also culturally-disadvantaged inhabitants of Africa. Not only, according to Kaplan, are Asians—unlike Africans-- willing to Americanize themselves, but in most of Asia Kaplan finds people who are using what he terms “local ingenuity,” a quality he attributes in turn to Asia’s ancient, civilized past and its written languages. On his tour of the Rishi Valley in India, Kaplan claims to observe a form of illiteracy that seems qualitatively different from illiteracy in Africa. He supports this with the frankly preposterous notion that since oral stories in India are based on written epics “thousands of years old” this “allows illiterate villagers [to] tap into a well developed, literate cultural environment, whereas in much of sub-Saharan Africa, local languages have been written down only in the last century” (365). Assigning a qualitative value to literacy simply does not help those who are illiterate, who do not and cannot have access to a literate environment if they cannot read. In fact the idea that a traditional literary culture exists within national boundaries only works to emphasize the barred access of the illiterate to a literate environment.

And in any case, even if we are to believe that ancient languages and civilizations, and the “local ingenuity” they purportedly give rise to are what is going to save Asia, this hardly supports the view—one Kaplan also claims to advance—that the only way to economic stability is through capital investment. His tour of Asia, and the Rishi Valley in

particular, seems to have its central ideological purpose in allowing Kaplan to say that a still tribalized Africa is simply not worthy of such investment. Reverting back to his geographical and environmental determinism, Kaplan writes the following of his trip through civil war torn Liberia:

Though I had seen no soldiers, let alone any atrocities or juju spirits, an indefinable wildness had set in. It occurred to me that the forest had made the war in Liberia. I have no factual basis for this, merely a traveler's intuition. The forest was partly to blame... teenage soldiers [broke] into bridal shops of Monrovia, dressing up like women-cum-juju spirits, and going on rampages that ended in ritual killings. (27)

In claiming to find a causality linking the forest, rampages, ritual killings and the war, Kaplan takes an imaginative leap that effectively allows him to avoid the blatantly racist idea that Africa is simply too uncivilized. An “indefinable wildness” seems, on the one hand, purposefully ambiguous—is it the forest or the Liberians, or both, that are wild?—but in the end it simply renders Liberia as helpless against a geography and nature which can hardly be blamed on past colonization or present-day exploitation by global capital. The operant rule for the traveler/writer here seems to be: where global finance and its state policy makers have already determined investment to be warranted (Asia) culture (in the guise of “ancient languages and civilizations”) becomes something the traveler can claim to witness “first hand”; where such investment has been essentially ruled out (Africa), nature (in the guise of geography and the environment) takes over. “Africa” may be, for Kaplan, “the inescapable center”(5) of humanity—in a purely paleontological sense—but he only travels there so as to find ample reasons to continue to consider Africa as socially peripheral.

Kaplan states that his goal in the travels recorded in *The Ends of the Earth* “was to see humanity in each locale as literally an outgrowth of the terrain and climate in which it

was fated to live" (7). But, as I have tried to show, the idea of the local means many, often contradictory things for Kaplan. Locality can be the wrong kind of locality, as in the case of Africa, where it works to repel capital, or it can be the right kind, as in the case of Asia, where it works in the opposite way. Moreover, the evocation of the local in the case of Africa, probably (as Kaplan sees it) beyond saving, allows Kaplan to warn the U.S. against "Africanization" (the turning of Washington D.C. into Washington, Adibjan) without pointing to the connections between the U.S. and global capital generally and conditions in Africa. Kaplan's travel narrative works to separate the world from Africa, implying that cultural values separate Africans from Asians as well as from Americans. In this regard, Kaplan has only to draw on the familiar domestic discourse that attempts to pin much of the ills of the underdeveloped parts of the U.S. on African-Americans, and presents Asian-Americans, on the other hand, as model minorities, willing to work in desperate conditions for low wages. Implied also here is the idea that culture in the U.S. would never let conditions deteriorate to the African levels. In an insidious sense, Kaplan travels to Africa, not, as travel writing has traditionally done, to encourage others to follow in his footsteps (even if only in fantasy) but so that the rest of us can be spared this experience. He goes, so to speak, for the last time, but go he must—showing how the "end of travel" itself requires a form of travel.

It is interesting to note, in this connection, that Kaplan refers to the experiences that produce his "first hand accounts" (upon which rest the entire credibility of his book) as "actual" travel. Globalization, and the ideological task of keeping Washington, Adibjan safely distant from Washington DC now require not only that travel in the traditional sense be possible—so as to continue to locate an exotic other to help secure

the national identity formations of a continuously expanding U.S. global presence—but that it continue to involve adventure and risk. Without these, the ‘first-hand accounts’ themselves lose value. Crossing national boundaries to see and document “novel” things is not enough. Kaplan must go about crossing different kinds of borders, while also insisting that older political borders still matter, in order to create this sense of adventure and thus to preserve the heroic form of travel. This requires that he take a jab at how others travel. He says that one does not learn much traveling in an “air-conditioned four-wheel drive Toyota Land Cruiser” which, he says, is the “medium through which senior diplomats and top Western relief officials often encounter Africa—suspended high above the road and looking out through closed windows you may learn something about Africa” (25). He goes on to say that in a “public bus, flesh pressed upon wet, sour flesh, you learn more;” and in a “bush taxi” or “mammy wagon,” one may learn even more, but it is on foot that ones learns the most. He states: “You are on the ground on the same level with Africans rather than looking down at them. You are no longer protected by speed or air-conditioning or thick glass. The sweat pours from you, and your shirt sticks to your body. This is how you learn” (25). In other words, “actual travel,” the kind from which one “learns,” requires some risk and discomfort. Stated yet more precisely: adding discomfort and risk, and consequently some credibility to an account of Africa that in no way otherwise differs from what the “senior diplomats and top Western relief officials” themselves give requires a kind of retro-fiction called “actual travel.”

Those who eschew this risk and discomfort and thus refuse to “learn” what official ideology already tells them are mere “tourists.” With undercutting commentary, Kaplan describes Anatolia, the Caucasus, and other stops on his own end-of-travel tour,

as “toxic holiday camp[s] for the working class on seven-day package tours” (147). But Kaplan is not adverse to the idea that “actual travel” might also afford a kind of excitement and self-fulfillment. And, though the possibilities of finding such fulfillment in Asia and Africa are far greater than in the U.S. or Europe, even parts of Africa and Asia can no longer continue to afford this, so he must find places that he considers even more remote—as well as look and act the part. As Kaplan observes in his “marble-and-glass ‘efficiency’ hotel” in Bangkok: “I crowded into the elevator with several men in expensive lightweight suits. One held a Compaq Contura in his hand... With only my backpack and batch of blank notebooks and Bic pens, I suddenly felt antiquated” (371). Again, Bangkok, for all its economic progress—lauded by Kaplan when it is a question of abandoning Africa to its “geographical destiny”—has lost something for him, specifically the traditional privileges of “actual” travelers. Kaplan admits that: “the poorer and more violent the country, the greater the social status enjoyed by a foreign correspondent. In Bangkok, a journalist was nothing compared to an investment banker” (371-2). Thus he offhandedly concedes that the distinction between travel and tourism has more to do with the will to take risks, suffer discomfort and “learn”; the economic progress, development, and investment, of which the marble hotel is indicative, cheapens his own travel experience. Since Bangkok does not afford him an “actual” enough experience, Kaplan must in fact travel to places that seem to have been left out of the processes of globalization—but where, unlike Africa, the human catastrophe for the moment does not interfere with a strictly non-political form of risk. Witness Kaplan, then, in the Hunza Valley (under the control of the Pakistani government), where he takes an immediate liking to a traveling couple, Dave and Lynn. The latter have come here to the

Hunza Valley after unsatisfying experiences in Kuala Lumpur, where, Kaplan tells us, they saw about "a hundred cranes" outside their window. In India they saw haze over the Taj Mahal, and "they told sad tales of deforestation in Nepal" (320). The Hunza Valley, even if it benefits from "irrigation and reforestation programs," shows none of the signs of the development that elsewhere win Asia praise from Kaplan (320). Here, in fact, we have an especially poignant form of dislocalism: Kaplan must travel to—and write about—the Hunza Valley so as to endow his frankly neo-liberal views of Africa and Asia generally with the heroic, first-hand "actual" aura of the true traveler. He approvingly quotes Dave as saying "it's dangerous but what the hell... I'd rather die on a glacier than be mugged in a western city or be killed in a suburban car accident" (319). Kaplan goes on to relate that "Dave and Lynn were getting the equivalent of a classical education free-of-charge simply by traveling and studying the ancient spoken languages in these valleys" (320). He is "delighted" by their "stories of being awakened in the middle of the night by yaks outside their tent in Tibet, and feels like hugging [Lynn]" when she tells him that she writes her free-lance stories on note-pads rather than bringing a laptop, which in any case probably would not work in places like Hunza valley. Kaplan himself says that he has stopped bringing a computer on his trips because it is "liberating" (320). The lack of technology, which, in other parts of the book, he presents as detrimental to the world becomes liberating for him.

The same dislocalizing logic occasionally even informs what is otherwise Kaplan's grim, quasi-Malthusian African narrative. In Freetown, Kaplan stays with a friend, Michelle, who works as a diplomat in a foreign mission. He describes Michelle's life in Sierra Leone with a twinge of envy, terming a dinner party she hosts as

“charming” because, he says, “here was a diplomat who, neither an ambassador nor even a chargé d’affaires, was nevertheless able to attract some of the most important people in the nation to her house where a fine meal was prepared with the assistance of a housekeeper” (55). He further says that “the style in which Michelle was able to live in Freetown and the rank of officials she was able to attract were indicative of the gap between a wealthy Western land and a poor African one” (55). However, the very gap that makes Michelle’s dinner party “charming” for Kaplan, is elsewhere charged with having made even old style colonialism essentially too good for Africa. The one redeeming feature of “ends of the earth” such as Sierra Leone is that they afford the possibility of self-fulfillment for Western travelers and diplomat-adventurers such as Michelle: “To most people, especially to Washington careerists, the idea of being a middle-or low-ranking diplomat in a place like Sierra Leone would represent the ultimate in under-achievement, unless it came very early in one’s career” (57). But Michelle is to be envied for having a job “far more stimulating intellectually than almost any job a capital like Washington or London had to offer” (57). Here the “learning” that distinguishes the tourist from the traveler takes an insidious form indeed. Kaplan quotes his diplomatic friend approvingly: “Waking up each morning in a place that’s on the verge of anarchy provides a unique insight into humanity. There are never any lulls” (57).

Here we seem to have “traveled” a long way from Kaplan’s notion of crumbling borders and the experience of seeing America everywhere. But keeping to the official creed of neo-liberal globalization is only half of Kaplan’s mission in *The Ends of the Earth*. The sameness and sanctity of “America” must, as in virtually all American travel writing, be re-affirmed, and thus there must always be created a clear dividing line

between the U.S. and the rest of the world. It is this ideology and accompanying narrative structure that allows Kaplan to look with a certain favor on the idea of keeping some nations on the “verge of anarchy” because, thanks to US-led global capital, it is only that way that they can provide a stimulating education for the likes of American ‘actual travelers’ such as Kaplan. Kaplan reproduces a worldview in which the only answer to poverty and inequity is the influx of capital and then, in a typically dislocalizing move, goes on to invoke the notion of local culture and geography—the *sine qua non* of “actual travel”—as placing severe limits on the usability of that capital. It is just in this way that the real forces of *globalization* threaten to undermine the genre of travel writing, while the ideology of *globalism* requires the genre’s perpetual continuation. Dislocalism is called forth to solve the contradictory task of proclaiming the crumbling of borders while simultaneously re-consolidating them through the act and the discourse of travel. Without the risk of poverty and even anarchy, the risk of travel itself cannot be safeguarded, a risk without which, in turn, a certain deeper risk to the integrity of American identity formation is brought into play—a dislocalizing set of moves that, as I shall show, unfolds in a different way in Mary Morris’ memoirs, *Nothing to Declare*.

Mary Morris: Interruption of Domesticity

Women travel writers have long contended with the fact that that travel has traditionally been and remains a primarily male genre. For example, Flora Tristan (*Voyage to Brazil*, 1824), Maria Graham (*Letters from India*, 1824), and Mary Elizabeth Crouse (*Algiers*, 1906) write at some length about how travel for women poses special problems. The genre of women’s travel writing, as Mary Louise Pratt has argued, both duplicates and interrupts many of the various strategies that male travel writer’s deploy.

Mary Morris, in keeping with this long tradition, attempts, like other males writers, to reproduce a sense of risk in her writing. Yet, ironically, as a woman she is in some ways better able to exploit the sense of danger and fear so valued by her male counterparts in the genre, simply by tapping in to the common belief that women are at far more at risk while traveling than men. But since time-space compression and the corresponding industrializing and globalizing of travel have made it a relatively risk-free activity, Morris, like Kaplan, finds herself in the paradoxically, dislocalized position of having to re-insert a risk factor in order to reproduce the familiar genre of travel writing itself. The title of her book—*Nothing to Declare: Memoirs of a Woman Traveling Alone*—already points to this quite blatantly with its reference to a solitary woman abroad and the evocation of going through customs at a border crossing, always an experience fraught with a certain tension and anxiety.

At the same time, like other contemporary travel writers in the U.S. faced with the effects of globalization, Morris comes under ideological pressures not only to resuscitate “travel” in its heroic form but to maintain the kind of neat and clean separation between “here” and “there”—in this case the U.S. and Mexico—that has traditionally made travel narratives an effective dislocalizing medium for reproducing and redrawing discourses of national identity. As I will show, Morris accomplishes this in large part by re-deploying some of the more conventional moves in women’s travel writing.

Specifically, I will show that a rather old theme in women’s travel writing—the interruption of the narrative of domesticity—becomes for Morris a way to reaffirm national boundaries. More precisely, I will demonstrate that, while international travel for women typically signifies an escape for women from home and domesticity, in *Nothing*

to Declare, it is the same interruption-of-domesticity narrative that furnishes a way of *rearticulating* a U.S. nationalist framework. If Kaplan travels in order to articulate the perniciousness of various “national” localities as a result of their adherence to non-Western ways, for Morris, the locality of Mexico is, on the surface of things, a refuge from a life grown weary in the hyper-Westernized, over-civilized setting of contemporary New York City. In search of respite from a “terrible feeling of isolation and a growing belief that America had become a foreign land” Morris goes in “search of a place where the land and the people and the time in which they lived were somehow connected” (11). Reading the word “foreign” here as connoting simply the affects of loneliness and alienation, one finds oneself on the familiar ground of a kind of pastoral, with Mexico and its “land and people” standing in as the warm and welcoming peasants and shepherds. But “foreign” also must clearly be read as referring to the perceived de-nationalizing of New York and the U.S. in general, thanks to immigration and other effects of increased globalization. In this sense, Morris’s narrative suggests other than merely pastoral motives: home has become “foreign,” therefore it has become necessary to travel to something even more “foreign” so as to re-domesticate and safeguard the homeland.

Morris, her locus of narration already Mexico, tells us that her apartment in New York is surrounded with “familiar things” such as “mementos from friends,” and “pictures” of her grandmother’s family, and of her parents (41-2). But, she relates, “all of this is my memory now.... I have brought nothing to recall my former life, none of the smells or textures or tastes or faces or roads or landscapes I have known before” (42). In other words, Morris declares herself committed not only to interrupting a familiar

domestic life but also to making sure there is a definite break between her life in the U.S. and that in Mexico, including geographical differences. All of this, as we might suspect, is a prelude to the confession of another kind of domestic estrangement: “there was a man named Daniel who had left me the year before.... He was one of the reasons for my going to Mexico” (50). We also find out that she has had another lover in New York who hit and abused her. Though seeking the risks and adventures of a “woman traveling alone,” it emerges that home in New York has become a danger zone of another kind. Morris is trying to heal from failed and abusive relationships and she imagines Mexico to be the place that can help her realize this.

Thus—and here again she is initially unlike the declaredly dystopian Kaplan—Morris imagines Mexico, at the beginning of her journey, as a faraway place where unfamiliarity and foreign ways can work to restore the sense of domestic happiness and security. But to make a new “home” in a strange, distant place requires, for the pastoral traveler just as much as for Kaplan the cynical voyager through the underworld, that the stigma of tourism be carefully avoided. Here Morris makes the anti-tourism moves familiar in travel literature. So, for example, she chooses not to stay in Mexico City because it is too overrun by tourists and settles for San Miguel. There she finds a place to live in a neighborhood called San Antonio where very few Americans lived because it was “too far from the center of things” (8). So, though in a less pronounced way than Kaplan, Morris finds that simply crossing national borders is not enough to feel that she has traveled and that her life in the U.S. is safely far away.

Nothing to Declare appeared just before the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was signed in 1992, and several years before the treaty was

implemented in 1994. The perception that Mexico is integrally connected to the U.S. is articulated by some of the language in the preamble to the NAFTA agreement:

The Government of Canada, the Government of the United Mexican States and the Government of the United States of America, resolved to: STRENGTHEN the special bonds of friendship and cooperation among their nations; CONTRIBUTE to the harmonious development and expansion of world trade and provide a catalyst to broader international cooperation; CREATE an expanded and secure market for the goods and services produced in their territories... (NAFTA—PREAMBLE, Capital Letters Original).

While the NAFTA language gestured toward what was already happening-- the creation of an expanded market and cooperation of trade between the three signatory nations-- the impending agreement prompted public re-articulations of the anxiety over the coming erasure of the boundaries between U.S. and Mexico. The media exacerbated fears that hordes of Mexicans would stream across U.S. borders demanding undeserved rights to jobs and money. The inclusion of Mexico in NAFTA produced a number of racist and stereotypical arguments that sought to construct Mexico as yet again the dangerous other in the national imaginary of the U.S. Though Morris does not speak directly about these ideas, her book, reflecting the public conversations at the time, also works to construct Mexico as a place of danger.

Though Morris tells the reader that she desires to go to Mexico for its supposed power to heal her alienated self, she begins to underscore her fears of the place as well. Thus, "San Miguel de Allende is not a dangerous place, not a threatening place," she

insists, but even while adding that she had “never been more afraid in [her] life than [she] was in San Miguel” (25). For Mexico, while a setting for a pastoral idyll, is also a land of predatory men. There are numerous points in the book in which Morris imagines being pursued by unknown male assailants. For example, while taking a swim at night, she suspects she is being pursued by two men. She thinks to herself that it “would be easy for them to pluck [her] from the sea” (102). She decides to swim “into the darkest water of all” and stays there “until they were gone” (102). These kinds of fantasies likely strike a chord with those of her readers who have already been caught up in the narrative imagining of Mexico as a dangerous place especially for women. Again, as with Kaplan, this element of fear and risk is somehow required to certify that it is travel, not merely tourism, that is the subject of her story. Citing Camus, Morris claims that “what gives value to travel is fear” (25). But more than simply valorizing Morris’ travel narrative, the surplus fear and danger available to women travelers are extracted from the U.S. and placed safely within the borders of Mexico. Morris recounts her romantic past in New York while she is in Mexico as if she is trying to remember a dream: “Sometimes at night I lie awake and try to remember a certain person’s features. Or his scent... And I try to piece him together, like a jigsaw, but I cannot find his substance” (42). And yet, these sorts of recollections seem almost outside the substance of her book if only because, as she says, she is making an effort to forget that life. What amounts to her domestic misadventure in New York only manifests itself at the margins of her Mexican solo quest as what she calls as her “ghosts.” But these ghosts soon become pronounced in the story in unanticipated ways.

Morris' effort to leave behind her broken relationships increasingly breaks down because she must confront them again in the course of her relationship with a Mexican woman named Lupe. Lupe, with whom Morris forms her closest relationship in San Miguel, lives close to her house, runs errands for her and takes care of other domestic chores. Morris says: "I went to Lupe for things I needed. For washing clothes I could not get clean, for cooking rice" (27). Lupe herself, meanwhile, has been having a relationship with a man, José Luís, who is absent from her life most of the time. She has seven children, and one of her daughters, it turns out, is expecting a child with a man who is also an absentee father. Morris's living situation assumes representational shape as the direct contrast with that of Lupe. Morris rents a house that "has a living room, kitchen, and small patio" in addition to two bedrooms and a balcony. (8). Lupe on the other hand, lives in a small place with several children, a place "infested with flies" and with no place to wash and clean. Though neither Morris nor Lupe have stable love lives, Morris portrays Lupe's state of abandonment as the consequence of her own looseness in relations with men. Lupe, it turns out, was married before she met José Luís, and has children both from him and from her former husband. José Luís, while still paying Lupe occasional visits, sees another woman as well. In fact, it is unclear exactly how many children Lupe has by each man. At one point teary-eyed Lupe tells Morris that José Luís' other "señora" is having another child, but follows this with the rueful observation that "a man isn't worth crying over" (127).

Aware that Lupe (at least in Morris's depiction of her) fits into widely held North American views regarding the gender relations of Latin American men and women in general, Morris writes that she found herself "wondering if [she] felt judgmental" (33).

But Lupe is disturbing to Morris's Mexican interlude in a yet more profound way, for, by bringing into sharper focus those troubling aspects of domesticity that Morris would rather keep relegated to a ghostly netherworld, Lupe also makes it harder for Morris to draw a clear borderline between her lives in the U.S. and Mexico. Here the dislocalizing impulse of *Nothing to Declare* emerges into fuller view: the escape from the domestic misadventure in New York into the hoped for self-reintegration of her Mexican solitaire only confronts Morris with a domestic scene that suggests how lucky she has been all along. The stage is now set for shunning Lupe's world and returning to the relative haven of superior gender politics and domestic possibility in New York—for women like Morris, that is. Leaving "home" is merely a way of securing it more firmly against the possibility of real "dislocation" and critique. But in the age of globalization and time/space compression, the fiction of "travel" becomes more and more necessary to this domestic restoration.

It is true that, on its surface, the relationship that Morris shares with Lupe appears to make a case for bridging the differences between two women who do, after all, share similar experiences with men. Perhaps Mexico is not so "far" from the U.S. after all. For example, Lupe finds Morris crying and, with sisterly concern, chides her gently with her refrain that "it was no good to cry over a man" (19). Later, while attending the celebrations for the Mexican Day of the Dead, Morris asks Lupe to bury her in the Mexican part of cemetery since the part where the Americans were buried was "all fenced in, well gardened and kept up, but with no visitors and no one bringing flowers" (187). But though Morris here seemingly desires a connection with Mexico, on a more fundamental plane she continues trying to rebuild that fence. Here the reader is reminded

of Morris's depiction of a hole in a city wall through which poor people were crossing into more well-off areas that had been cemented closed with "shards of U.S. soda pop bottles" such as Coca Cola and Pepsi "to keep the poor people away" (89).

It is through Lupe that Morris confronts the "ghosts" of her own past relationships with men, suggesting, perhaps, that Morris did have to leave "home" in order to re-discover it. She confesses to Lupe that she would like to have both a husband and children. Lupe jolts Morris out of her ghostly relation to her own domestic troubles. But there is a subtle move to exclude and separate the two worlds at work here, outside the sisterly bond. Lupe's woes--broken relationships, little money, more children than she can take care of, a house hardly adequate for living—are all symptomatic of the condition of poor and working women generally under the globalized, neo-liberal regime that has more and more placed the boundaries of nations in question. Lupe, for example, tells Morris: "José Luis gives me fifty pesos a day to feed my children. It is not enough. I barely make do. That is why I work for the señora of the Blue Door Bakery"(33). It is precisely this kind of work that women routinely perform for money in the informal sector that has made their exploitation even greater than in their work as part of a formal work force. Historically, even in the formal sector, women have performed temporary and low wage labor. Furthermore, Mexican women perform this kind of informal labor even in the U.S., supporting women like Morris. But these forces do not enter into Morris's imaginary (for Lupe's exploitation here is largely linked with her experience with Mexican men) because if they did they would complicate the dislocalized arrangement that restricts

them safely to the Mexican side of the border, where the well-intentioned feminist traveler from the north can regard them from a safe distance.

In effect, the character of Lupe makes it possible for Morris to attribute a national and cultural character to conditions for women that are class-based. "It is difficult for men and women to get along," says Lupe, with an ethnographized naivety that more easily shrugs this all off as a simple fact of (Mexican) life (33). "Mexican men," proclaims Lupe, "are either too serious and no fun or fun and lighthearted and not to be trusted" (128). And Morris needn't tell the reader whether she agrees with this native wisdom in order for the global conditions of gender and class to be safely re-contained across the border.

Morris' impetus to project bad gender politics onto Mexico also takes other forms in her narrative. For example, she finds herself getting bored in a relationship she initiates with a Mexican man, Alejandro. He seems to be the opposite of José Luís in terms of his relationship to domesticity. Alejandro largely takes care of the domestic chores and even proposes marriage to the author. But Morris writes that she grew bored with his domestic solicitude: "I had been with men where I had to do all the work and I had hated that.... But the opposite wasn't satisfying either, and I felt in my relationship with him more like a man than a woman" (179). Leaving aside for the moment the possibility of reading this relationship in terms of the politics of racial hierarchies, this episode suggests that, while Lupe's relationships with men are framed within *machismo*, Alejandro (North)-Americanizes Morris's desire to be "more like...a woman." Is there a possibility given these parameters to imagine Morris having the same opportunity of domestic happiness in New York?

Lupe's role as foil to Morris's dislocalized domesticity works in other ways as well. If Lupe brings her to the realization that she wants a husband and kids and at least the part-time duties of a housewife, this hardly enforces on the author/narrator a deeper understanding of the latter category. In a discussion about the effects of machinery on the worker in the first volume of *Capital*, Marx explains how machinery was "transformed into a means of increasing the number of wage laborers by enrolling... every member of the worker's family without distinction of age or sex" into the workforce (517). This meant the usurpation of the free domestic labor of the women, a cost that would otherwise have to be covered by capitalists. But it is this particular relationship of women to domesticity (where their labor is considered a natural resource) that Morris wants to interrupt through her Mexican sojourn. And this interruption is itself dependent on Lupe's labor, who, like many women, while working for free in her own household is also driven by her economic circumstances to do odd jobs for Morris and take care of Morris' apartment while Morris is away touring the rest of Mexico. The conditions that force women to work as domestic servants hardly leave room for the kind of familial environment so desired by both Lupe and Morris. The kind of work women routinely do in many different parts of the world that often serves upper-class women in a variety of ways, from informally taking care of their homes and children to working for low wages in the formal sector producing time-saving domestic products such as stoves, washing machines, microwaves, refrigerators, and so forth, also takes them away from their own homes for long periods of time.

This is a set of conditions that *Nothing to Declare* cannot confront and displaces through a cultural-essentializing that in turn masks itself behind an abstract gender

politics. Again, by implying that Lupe's situation is the result of a *machismo* Mexican men—after all, Morris pays Lupe for her work, while José Luís merely takes from her—Morris can reproduce the distance between the U.S. and Mexico, interrupting the domestic misadventure that haunts her wherever she goes. In this context, a fantasy Morris has in which she imagines herself as a bird that flies to her grandmother's Ukrainian village is worth quoting at some length:

I perch above the house. I drink black tea, suck sugar in my beak, and munch on dried bread, and when it is time for them to leave for America, I follow. I fly. I must go and build my nest... A male finds me and we mate, almost in midair. He hovers over my back and our wings enfold... I am an eagle woman, a builder now, layer of eggs, perched on high, a woman of both heights and heart. I lay two perfect eggs... My mate disappears, but for forty-two days I sit and wait, and then they hatch. I care for these young until the fledglings go. And then I am free to fly to new places. (245)

The eagle seems to be a reference to Quetzalcoatl, who, according to legends, is an Aztec god that created life and would one day return to reclaim the lost empire. Now the image of Quetzalcoatl is employed by many different kinds of movements for freedom in Mexico and other places.⁶ This fantasy, occurring to Morris as her departure back to the U.S. is imminent, is one of freedom in domesticity and also reasserts her view of Mexico as an ancient and legendary place that helps her to heal. In its structure it shares certain similarities with Lupe's life: men appear to produce children but then disappear. But this fantasy is unavailable to Lupe for she is unable to fly free. Her children and the hardly tolerable living conditions in which she has had to make her home bind her to Mexico. And it is precisely because of her specific condition that she can support Morris' fantasy and not her own, even if both share the same desire for a rewarding domestic life. Having safely shunned her ghosts within the boundaries of Mexico, Morris returns to the U.S.,

⁶ For a more detailed discussion of Quetzalcoatl, see David Carrasco's *Quetzalcoatl and the Irony of Empire* (2000).

where the rhetoric of a more enlightened gender politics redeems and liberates a narrative of domesticity now safely restored to its place within national borders.

Paul Theroux: The Politics of Fiction

It is useful to recall at this point Paul Theroux's lament in the Introduction to *The Best American Travel Writing* that there are no Edens anymore, and that "the world has turned... Just about the entire earth has been visited and re-visited" (xvii). As I have shown in relationship to Kaplan and Morris, it is this anxiety about the end of travel that drives travel writers to seek somehow to preserve the genre and, in the process, protect the notion of a distinctive American identity. Theroux's recent novel, *Hotel Honolulu* (2001), a work of outright fiction at one level at least, resonates strongly with his lament that there are no more Edens. *Hotel Honolulu* is in large part about the excesses of tourism. Honolulu itself, as setting, emphasizes the compression of space through time and highlights the "end of Edens" anxiety by taking as its point of departure not only the turning of exotic destinations into tourist resorts of the most mundane kind but the fact that one need not even travel outside the U.S. to get to these places.

The narrator is himself a writer who claims to have given up writing. He takes a job in a seedy motel from which the novel takes its title. At the novel's outset we hear the voice of the narrator: "nothing to me is so erotic as a hotel room" (1). So from the very beginning of the narrative we find ourselves already in a touristic world, far removed from Theroux's privileged and anti-touristic world of trains. The narrator, like Theroux, has written about thirty books and claims that he is trying to start his life over at the age of forty nine, after having lost money and houses and gone through a divorce. He confesses that in his new occupation as the manager of Hotel Honolulu, he is taking

refuge from his life as a writer: "I needed a rest from everything imaginary, and felt that settling in Hawaii, and not writing, I was returning to the world" (7). The fiction openly proposes the idea that tourism has so pervaded the planet that there is nothing more for a travel writer to write about, nothing to do but to start working in the tourist industry. The narrator/protagonist is frequently thankful for his job. "My career as a writer," he confesses, "had not trained me for anything practical.... I had no marketable skill.... I was grateful to my employees for their work. They ran the hotel and they knew it." (52). There is essentially nothing for him to do. What better job for a failed writer? As he states: "I had gotten to these green mute islands, humbled and broke again, my brain blocked" (52). The novel thus makes a direct link between the blocked brain of the writer and the need to work in tourism for money. The block itself afflicts the protagonist while still living, and trying to write travel narratives, on the mainland. Thus it is the (fictionally) declared end of travel and the exhaustion of travel writing (or what passes for it) that endangers the narrator's way of making a living and sends him "traveling," so to speak, into the dark heart of tourism itself.

The setting of Honolulu gestures in several different directions in the novel. As I have already pointed out, it emphasizes the fact that one need not travel outside the U.S. to experience the exotic locales so desired by travelers and tourists alike and that it helps travel writers such as Theroux to circulate the notion that travel is threatened. But more importantly, Hawaii as a setting facilitates the drive of travel writers such as Theroux to dislocalize their own writerly practices. In some sense, Honolulu has become emblematic of the fact that, with the "end of travel," what passes for the "exotic" may as

well be sought within the U.S. itself, and nowhere more successfully than in cities that depend upon tourist dollars, such as New York, San Francisco, Orlando, or Honolulu.

And yet Honolulu is not quite like other cities. It is not “American” in quite the same way as the others. As part of the Asia Pacific Rim, Hawaii is a politically American destination able to represent itself as a place in which pleasurable excesses of a different sort than those in New York are available for the tourists. The narrator and Theroux himself as author, draw upon this perception so as to help shore up the increasingly globalized imaginary borders of the U.S.: whatever excesses of tourism found within the borders of the U.S. can be contained within the only quasi-American periphery of Hawaii. I will argue in what follows that *Hotel Honolulu*, perhaps even more emphatically than non-fictional travel writing, implicitly reaffirms the hegemonic imaginary of the U.S. as the *mainland*, to be cautiously kept apart from the more peripheral states, territories, and military bases in places such as Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Guam. I will also show that, for Theroux, the very fictional form of the novel itself functions dislocally as a way to preserve the genre of travel narrative and the notion of a distinctly American (or this case mainland, continental) cultural identity.

Theroux, in fact, gives some hint of this specific utility of fiction in his aforementioned introduction to the edited collection *Best American Travel Writing*. Here, in addition to criticizing dismissively much of the travel writing being done today and lamenting the “end of Edens,” he holds out a reprieve for the genre: the literary notion of point of view. People, he says, do not read his books to learn, say, about China but rather to gain *his perspective* on China. This move clearly opens a path to the travel novel, and travel fiction in general, where the authors need not be responsible for

reporting facts; the idea of their perspective gains in value. Indeed, the concept of point of view or perspective is given special emphasis in *Hotel Honolulu*, whose very novel form positions it, in a sense, to play the role, so to speak, of a meta-travel narrative.

But before pursuing this further, I want to discuss the way in which the narrator of *Hotel Honolulu* both rationalizes his life in Hawaii and yet sees it as an ill-fit for the image he has of himself. Within this particular negotiation, the narrator dramatizes in relation to himself the ambiguity noted earlier in the physical setting of Hawaii: far enough away to be imagined as exotic and yet close enough to become merely the sad emblem of the domestic excesses of tourism to be found anywhere within the U.S.

The genre of the fictional meta-travel narrative bestows on Theroux a kind of authority in much the same way that the notion of the first-hand-account does on Kaplan. But non-fictional first-hand-accounts of Hawaii are countless. In foregrounding the concept of perspective, Theroux's book remains credible while still playing with the boundary between fact and fiction.

This foregrounding move within the travel genre begins with the character of the narrator. In talking about *Hotel Honolulu* in interviews, Theroux takes the opportunity to warn against mistaking narrator for author. So, for example, in the interview with Barbara Lane cited above, Theroux states: "it's a mistake to confuse the "I" in a novel with the person writing the novel. Because writers are notoriously unreliable... the whole notion of writing - writing is invention, it's imagination. You improve things, or you might make it worse, but what you're doing is inventing the truth" (The Commonwealth Club of California). Yet despite this warning and the fact that the narrator never refers to himself as "Paul Theroux," as Theroux often does in his other writing, the narrator of

Hotel Honolulu refers to himself in ways that leave little doubt of his autobiographical origins: he, like Theroux, has written and published some thirty books, has been recently divorced, and so forth. Lane further asks him in the interview: “Now, you’ve opened up a can of worms right off the bat by admonishing us that this narrator is not you. You’ve played with narrators who may be you, or may be some part of you, or may be a fictionalized you in “My Secret History” and “My Other Life.” Can you talk about that a little bit, and how people become confused?” (Commonwealth Club of California).

Theroux seems to embrace this confusion. He acknowledges what seems to be self-portraiture in his work: “I think there is a version of the self-portrait, but I think in addition to what I just said about the unreliable narrator...” He further says: “I can only write about a writer like myself, who has my habits. I can’t imagine writing any other way except the way that I write. So when I think of a writer, I can really - my own experience is tried and true. I understand that best, and so the writers in my book all tend to resemble me in their habits” (Commonwealth Club of California). Thus, while on one hand he warns against mistaking the writer for the narrator on the other he clearly wants to position himself in such a way as to acknowledge a resemblance between the narrator and himself. Note here how even clichés of literary theory regarding the constructedness of all narrative, whether fictional, non-fictional, or autobiographical expand the availability of genres that could possibly sustain and renew a travel fiction that has been largely limited to non-fiction with its emphasis on the writer’s “actual travel.”

In fact, playing with the boundary between fact and fiction is precisely what the genre of travel writing is characterized by its critics as doing. Much has been written about the way in which travel writers negotiate such boundaries, primarily as a way to

caution against taking the often “first hand” narratives of the travel books as “true.” Critics such as Mary Louise Pratt, Paul Fussell, and Terry Caesar continue to stress the way in which travel writers invent the world they claim to see. James Clifford has pointed to the need of ethnography to make clear distinctions between the literary travel writers and ethnographers themselves, primarily because travel writers are largely considered unaccountable for the highly entertaining narratives they produce of the places they visit. But travel writers themselves, if only so as to hold fast to the generic identity they have selected for themselves, must also doggedly hold on to the notion of “real” reporting. As I have shown, both Kaplan and Morris rely heavily upon the claim to first-hand veracity. And to reiterate again, even *The Sheltering Sky*, one of the better known of the “travel” novels that Paul Bowles was producing as early as the 1940s and the 50s, transports the reader into imagining that there is an interior of Africa that exists outside of the book. Theroux’s own earlier novel *The Mosquito Coast* (1982), the story of a utopian society project in Latin America that eventually goes sour, builds itself around a similarly constructed belief on the reader’s part in the “there” of the fiction. Travel writing has also and long since discovered how to position itself close to the margins of the fictional when its claims to the veracity of the “first hand” are endangered.

What is distinctive about *Hotel Honolulu*, however, is that it (loosely) fictionalizes even the ambivalences and possible exhaustion of the travel writing genre itself, taking the impulse to rescue the genre through the foregrounding of “perspective” still one step further. For Theroux, the novel offers a way of taking even further license with the genre of travel writing than its rules and conventions had heretofore tolerated.

This is simultaneously an attempt to expand the range of what sorts of narrative material can be legitimately included within the genre.

By making fictionalization a means to what is also the meta-narrativizing of travel, Theroux can still claim the ultimate value and authority of his own “perspective”—not just the real “China” but *his* China—but also create an extra space within which to distance himself from this perspective when the need arises. His “point of view” regarding Hawaii is licensed as the invention of Hawaii. Here we have dislocalism at full throttle: thematizing the “end of travel” allows not just for the continuation but for the *proliferation* of writing about travel. The specific mechanisms of this dislocalist meta-narrativizing in *Hotel Honolulu* are as follows: 1) the narrator/author can represent his own (travel) writer’s block and resulting abandonment of his career in travel writing precisely so as to convey the ironic result that he will always be a writer; and 2) despite, and precisely because of his (fictionalized) belief that life as a quasi-phony hotel manager in Honolulu is all that he is fit for now, he engineers the implication that in fact he will be always be different simply because he is still the genuine article: a writer from the mainland.

The narrator in *Hotel Honolulu* might in some ways be described as “going native.” He marries a woman named Sweetie, who, along with her mother Paumana, has worked most of her life in the hotel. He has a child with her, who, like her mother also grows up in the motel. But in effect, he preserves a more distant relationship with most of the people around him. His invariably bungled and ironized attempts to be like the Hawaiians he lives and works with merely furnish him with further opportunities for marking his distance from them and for condescending to them. He tells us that the owner

of the hotel Buddy Hamstra, “always introduced me by saying, ‘Hey, he wrote a book!’ I hated that” (7). Buddy’s new manager knows right away, and lets us know, that his boss was almost illiterate and that that perhaps that was the real reason why Buddy hired him—out of respect for someone who wrote books. Or consider, for example, the protagonist’s confessed response to people whenever they asked him what he did for a living. He tells us: “I never said ‘I am a writer’—they would not have known my books—but rather, ‘I run the Hotel Honolulu.’ That gave me a life and, among the rascals, a certain status” (7). The narrator of *Hotel Honolulu* does not want to admit he is—or was--a writer, not so much because he has left his career behind as he claims to have done (or to have wanted to do) but because he would not be recognized. Hawaii, after all, is not, for him, the sort of place that is much concerned with reading and writing. For him, writing about Hawaii is one thing; but to be a Hawaiian writer—if such a thing could in fact exist—is something else entirely.

For the narrator, writing, even when it is blocked and fails, is still the mark of a superior mind. The protagonist complains, for example, of a group of “visiting journalists, brazenly demanding a week of freebies in exchange for a few paragraphs in a colorful puff piece...” (308). He says: “These potential guests always asked to see me, and they’d announce ‘I am a travel writer.’ I associated this term with people who recounted their experiences in ... glossy in-flight magazines.... ‘Travel at its best,’ one of them wrote about the Hotel Honolulu” (308). It’s almost as if the protagonist had come to the Hotel Honolulu for no other reason but to be able to sneer back at these would-be imitators and debasers of travel writing. In the very next line he seeks to rescue the genre by confiding to the reader his own conviction—a refrain already familiar here in both

Kaplan and Morris-- that "travel at its best, in my experience, was often a horror and always a nuisance, but that was not the writer's point" (308). The resonance with much of Theroux's other critical (and non-fictional) writings about the state of travel writing today is here unmistakable.

No matter here that the narrator cannot write or the fact that he is now a hotel manager in Honolulu, and no matter how much he claims he is at home on the island, he takes great pains to establish that he will never be like the Hawaiians. It is not so much that he will always be an outsider, but that they, even on their own turf, will never be insiders. Once a writer, always a writer, especially since it is, after all, not the object written about but the "perspective" that really matters. To be a writer becomes, in Theroux's version of the "ends of the earth," purely a passive mark of identity and distinction. Sneaking looks at other people's mail, the protagonist readily excuses himself: "this, I told myself, was part of my job, my exploratory life as a writer" (86).

Writing—even if nothing is written—and point-of-view—even if it is only that of a motel manager—are intimately connected in the novel. From his position at the front desk, that is, squarely in the center of a touristic-industrial "heart of darkness," the narrator nevertheless gains a point-of-view that is far more credible than anyone else's in the novel. Theroux's claims in the aforementioned interview that that he, as a writer, must be accorded the right to be an unreliable narrator ring a bit false here. "Unreliability" apparently rests on a privileged kind of surveillance with which the locals themselves could not be trusted. A place to sneak looks at people's mail, the Hotel Honolulu is also a place for secret sexual adventures, and here too, the front desk is the best place for the non-writing writer to be perched. Here he has only to consult the other

hotel employees, especially the workers who clean the bathrooms, and he will become privy to these secrets. In fact the details of his own adoptive family life as a transplanted mainlander supposedly contain such a secret, one of major proportions. Rumor has it that the narrator's wife Sweetie was born out of a sexual liaison between her mother Paumana and a visiting John F. Kennedy. But Paumana, it seems, never knew and remains ignorant of the identity of her one-night stand. Her own "point of view" as a local vouchsafes her nothing. This is something for the protagonist to know: he names his daughter (by Sweetie) Rose and explains that it is after her great grandmother. Secrets become, for the narrator, the place-holders of writerly privilege and self-image, even when writing itself has to be given up. Secrets, even if known by the locals, would be wasted on them, for precisely because of their proximity to things, they could not remain distant enough to be able to write about them. They may live the stuff of secrets, like Paumana, but they still have no knowledge of it. Having sacrificed travel, and even writing itself, the protagonist of *Hotel Honolulu*, would seem to conserve in every other respect the Western, imperializing epistemological authority analyzed and critiqued by Pratt, Rosaldo, Clifford and others.

This dislocalizing move—traveling "there" precisely so as to remain where and what one is—extends to Hawaii/Honolulu itself as setting. It becomes a repository for what has come to be identified as the excesses of tourism: sexual exploits, affairs, even murders. And as semi-periphery, Hawaii is also sensed as containing the secrets of an even more dangerous and sinister nature, notably those of Pearl Harbor and the island's violent, colonial past. Though not explicitly mentioned in *Hotel Honolulu*, the novel is clearly informed by these historical ghosts.

But the narrator makes it plain that he is a poor fit for touristically-minded Honolulu society. His mainland identity must be maintained. He considers that he has gotten the hotel manager job largely because he is a “haole”—a white mainlander—at a point he particularly insists upon (7). While feeling like an outsider at a family dinner at the Honolulu Elk’s lodge, the narrator finds himself asking questions like “Where am I?” and “Who am I?” (206,7). At one point during the dinner he goes outside and joins a man who turns out to be Leon Edel, the biographer of Henry James. The narrator takes an immediate liking to him because he uses what the narrator considers eloquent language to describe the sun as “rubious,” “effulgent,” and “tessellated” on top of the distant sea waves (209). This meeting and his subsequent conversations with Edel drive home the fact that the narrator had never considered himself as part of his adopted Hawaiian surroundings. “I stared at him as though at a brave brother voyager from our old planet” he says after first meeting Edel, thus widening to cosmic dimensions the gulf between Hawaii and the mainland. When at one point Edel says to him that he “had no idea you were here too” this makes the narrator confide to the reader: “That ‘too’ was nice and made me feel I mattered” (211). When Edel inquires about his present writing projects, he says nothing about his supposed decision to stop writing and responds that he is “thinking of a book, titled *Who I Was*” (211). Suddenly the protagonist seems less settled with the idea of who he has become—a hotel manager. Luckily for him, as he notes, Leon is tactful enough not to inquire too much about that. Further conversations with Edel show that the protagonist is also less than comfortable with the idea of having Sweetie as a wife. With Edel, he refers to her as a “coconut princess” and a “little provincial” (211). He feels his wife has never understood him. When this line of thought

seems about to go too far, however, he grows more philosophical about it, even trying to rationalize it, with the support of Edel, by supposing that someone like Henry James would have approved of them living in Hawaii. Edel reassures him: “Henry James would love Hawaii because we do.” (212). “We mused without regret,” says the narrator, “knowing that we really belonged back there but that we had succeeded in slipping away” (213). Enlisting James as someone who would approve of their slipping away since he spent much of his own life in Europe, especially England, they happily fantasize a “Henry James in a billowing aloha shirt approach[ing] as Leon spoke, seeming to conspire, speculating about another inhabitant of our world” (212).⁷ This momentary image of James, far from his East Coast/European life that connotes to the narrator a kind of sophistication that they obviously desire, is employed to make the narrator feel better about his life. But soon he wonders: “how much of this description fitted me and my living here. James with plump sunburned jowls, in island attire...big busy bum... indicating throngs of tourists” (212).

This attachment to Leon Edel (and through him, to the real trove of cultural capital, Henry James) is a near perfect emblem of the narrator’s fear of taking on the persona of a tourist. The knowing confabulation with Edel and their desire to create an enclosed world for themselves—a kind island-mainland within Hawaii-- works to seal off any solidarity with the rest of the real island itself. Edel—the successful, if slightly overshadowed writer-biographer who will never have to fear the eclipse of his effectively immortal and inviolable subject—is the perfect foil against which to put in proper perspective the hero’s condescending relations with the rest of the local characters, with

⁷ For a more detailed account of the life and works of Henry James consult Sheldon M. Novick’s *Henry James: The Young Master* (1996)

perhaps the exception of Rose. His response to Buddy's request to get Edel to write a blurb about the hotel in the local newspaper is quite telling: "The very idea that the eighty-nine-year-old biographer of Henry James and chronicler of Bloomsbury would write a squib for the local paper about his liking for Hotel Honolulu was so innocent in its ignorance that I laughed out loud" (387). Only to such "innocent," unknowing, and intellectually clueless types—"lovable," of course, for those very reasons (for example his own wife)—would it occur to propose such a thing. But, then, only in the Hotel Honolulu would the self-reassuring and self-restoring gesture of a metropolitan/mainlander's laughter at the ignorance of the natives perform its real, dislocalizing work of reproducing the distance between the mainland and Hawaii. Everything, the slightest idea that might call the essential borders into question, is placed back within safe bounds.

By the novel's end, it becomes very clear that, though the narrator has come to Hawaii to make his peace with his life, he will never be at peace in it. He weeps incessantly at the news of Edel's death. Towards the end of the book, when Sweetie shares with him that she has become privy to another secret--John F. Kennedy Jr. will be visiting Hawaii--she learns that he already knows about this secret news. But, we are told, Sweetie refuses to believe him when he explains to her that he discovered this secret because Jacquelyn Kennedy herself had called to tell him of her son's visit. He wonders whether his wife knew him at all. Ruefully, the narrator concludes that his wife is a hopeless naïf, and that he has much more in common with his daughter Rose, who can still be rescued from the islander's provincialism and who might, after all, come to appreciate her fortuitous if distant connection to the Kennedys, represented here as the

paragons of East Coast aristocracy and refinement. Theroux's time/space compression is momentarily defeated and the wide and safe gulf between mainland and island, the nation and its dangerously ambiguous semi-periphery, traveler and tourist, opens reassuringly before him.

There is no return home in this novel, but none is needed. Though the narrator throughout the book claims that he has left his writing career behind, the ending of *Hotel Honolulu* reveals this to be false. He has, as might have been expected, been writing the book we read, a book he calls a "book of corpses" (424). But the narrator has apparently been resurrected—assuming he was ever in any real danger. Writing about travel is still possible after all: all that is necessary is to locate its "end" somewhere far away, at the "ends of the earth."

Conclusion

Though mobility is crucial to American self-definition, the very concept depends upon the notion of rootedness. As ideas of rootedness or home are destabilized for a variety of historical reasons, we see many dislocalizing attempts to reproduce and reaffirm those ideas. When travel writers complain that the good days of travel have passed, they are in effect complaining that many more people are traveling now and, in the process, cheapening the whole experience. Though travel writers claim that it is the tourists who are deteriorating the travel experience with their unreflective behavior, both concepts of "travel" and "tourism" carry class privilege and the perception of the erasure of national borders. The people who move as low-wage workers or those who are not able to move are caught within forced (im)mobility. They bring into focus the illusion of the dissipation of national boundaries. For travel writers, working from the privilege of

mobility (and who often work to obscure this privilege), the rhetoric of the end of travel is one aspect of the rhetoric of end of national boundaries. At a time when travel was not so cheap travel writers were better able to assume more stable boundaries. Crossing these boundaries in itself was a new and adventurous experience. In the next chapter I will discuss how in this search for newness an often maligned tourism is resuscitating itself by searching for “new” food experiences. In effect, food has become the site of tourism.

CHAPTER 4

TOURISM THROUGH FOOD

This chapter continues the discussions about metaphors of mobility. In the previous chapter I have already analyzed the ways in which the rhetoric of the end of travel works “dislocally” precisely so as to preserve and consolidate the genre of travel writing, and reinscribe its non-identity with tourism. But what of the latter category itself, and the narratives through which it is reproduced?

Tourism—the structure that would describe much of leisure travel today--has been maligned in popular discourse for so long that even tourists themselves do not like to identify themselves as belonging to this group. Tourists are often seen as people who go elsewhere only to do what they would do at home, but thereby obliging entire nations to change themselves according to their demands. As per usual, Theroux’s lament about tourists is quite typical of this pejorative image. He makes a point to note that travel writing is “not about vacation or holidays.” Nor is it about “a survey of expensive brunch menus, a search for the perfect Margarita, or a roundtrip of the best health spas in the Southwest;” it is indeed seldom about pleasure” (*Best American Travel Writing*, xix). For him Lago Agrio, “hideous oil boomtown in northeast Ecuador” would make the “perfect subject” of travel writing because it is so inhospitable to tourism (xviii, xix). What Theroux seems to overlook here, however, is that tourism as a marketable “experience” has become more and more dependent on ideas such as newness, adventure,

the exotic—that is, precisely the kinds of experiences Theroux reserves for the traveler like himself. For some time now, tourism has had to resuscitate itself by appearing to be travel. Thus, for example, the numerous guides for the average tourist often construct their readers as heroic travelers and include information about places and foods that are labeled as “off the beaten path.” *Lonely Planet*, a popular Australian series of tourist guide-books, markets itself to “adventurous travelers” who want to “explore and better understand the world” (6). The British *Time Out* series includes articles on culture, dining, and history. These and other tourist guides must in some way acknowledge that there are fewer and fewer new places to see, and yet must, at the same time, provide the tourist with precisely such new places to see—along with places to dine and sleep. The project of rescuing tourism in the face of the globalized erosion of precisely those dwindling pockets of exotic difference that make it possible, involves capital investments in the billions, on the part of airlines, travel agencies, credit card companies, the burgeoning travel/tourism magazine industry, food industries, and even entire national economies. All to some degree come to rely upon narrative strategies for representing as new and different places that increasingly no longer are.

As I have discussed in the previous chapter, travel writing often acts to rescue itself from what seems the impending “end of travel” by making itself out to be a form of narrative that carries otherwise inaccessible knowledge about culture, people, and places. (For Kaplan this is a “first hand” knowledge that augments the abstraction of foreign policy reports; for Morris, knowledge of gender and self “outside” the domestic sphere; for Theroux, the sheer meta-knowing of the writer’s own “perspective.”) Tourism, however, although it can often claim to have the added attraction of being a learning-

experience, remains, initially, ludic in form. Tourism cannot be work. But because of the bad name it has acquired as sheer recreation, it cannot be mere fun or play either. It therefore redeploys itself, on the narrative and symbolic level, somewhere between these two extremes, as what might be termed a form of pure, sensory *experience* as such: the aesthetic experience, through mobility and displacement, of the new.

But this is precisely the shrinking quality that travel once claimed to provide. How is tourism, as narrative, to do any better? For one thing, it can, partially because of its exemption from travel narrative's moral imperative to learn, re-aestheticize itself in a variety of ways, fantasizing the new and untried in the folds of "experience," even those of an experience as routinized as the ones Theroux describes above.

One of the most promising of these folds, I argue, is food, and the experience of eating—as well as, in a certain context—that of preparing it. The fact that food can be eaten and prepared in seemingly endless combinations is more and more that which provides tourism—that is, touring the same places over and over again-- with a new slant. Food infuses newness into what has become, as movement through space, the often totally predictable trajectory of tourists. It may not be necessary to travel in order to eat, and eating itself is stationary, even sedentary. But eating, and food in general, are sensory experiences to which there can be added a seeming infinity of nuances, narratives and fantasies. Therefore the experience of food, once one *has* traveled, can work retrospectively to add newness to the "tour" itself.

Food tourism and its narratives, moreover, play what I will show to be a subtle but nevertheless influential role in reproducing a dominant American identity-formation and adapting the latter to globalized conditions. Precisely because of what can be argued

to be the non-existence or at least non-cohesion of a U.S. national cuisine, U.S.-based food tourism and food narratives generally become highly adaptable and mutable symbolic staging areas for the “dislocal” reproduction of nationalist paradigms.

I will look specifically in this context at *Endless Feasts* (2001) an edited collection of writing from the archives of *Gourmet Magazine*; at the magazine *Food and Wine* as a prime example of a medium that combines food narratives with how-to techniques for the home chef; and at the cable-television program *A Cook's Tour*, produced by the Food Network and starring the chef-author Tony Bourdain. I will examine the way in which these three cultural productions participate in globalism by attempting to position themselves as both local/national and global through ideas such as fusion cuisine, adventure, newness, and fantasy.

Food description in the context of travel/tourism is not new. Nineteenth century travel narratives often commented on the ways food was prepared and consumed. But these commentaries were often framed by notions of risk and health that were part of a larger symbolic construction of faraway places and peoples as strange, different, and potentially dangerous. Mark Twain, for example, is famous for fasting and describing the nature of eating on board ships during periods of food scarcity. In “My Debut as a Literary Person” (first published in 1899), he described sailors as going to bed hungry and eating such things as leather boot-straps and whatever salvageable bits of food were around. He and his shipmates arrive starved in Hawaii, having had to survive on ten days of food rations during forty-three days of sailing. Yet despite the grueling situation at sea, one does not get what today would be the expected account of savory and exotic food experiences once the remote destination is reached. Although at times described as

delicious, food away from home simply does not have this kind of narrative, or aesthetic value. (In *Roughing It*, Twain, in Honolulu, speaks of some delicious fruits; but after eating tamarind we get a description of how he suffered from teeth problems). Melville's *Typee* is also replete with examples of the many times the narrator and his companions had to survive without food and had to make do with whatever they had. And even accounts of food that the narrator describes as not "disagreeable to a European palate" and sometimes delicious--such as the breadfruit poee-poe he eats at a reception where he fails to observe normal customs--are often accompanied by statements of his own state of starvation (70-1). Framed by a narrative of risk and danger, of starvation, and even of cannibalism, the food descriptions of nineteenth century American travelers reported about foods that their readers would not only never get to taste but that they might not want or dare to taste.

Since then, this identification of the pleasures of travel with the pleasures of eating has over the last century become so intimate an aspect of contemporary mass-media-produced narratives that it readily becomes the food experience that foregrounds the travel experience, rather than vice-versa. Even more significantly, the contemporary food-narratives generated in unprecedented quantities by a mass-media enterprise including magazines, newspaper articles, food television programming, and even cookbooks evoke a food experience that is completely aestheticized. In a way that nineteenth century travelers, even from the comparatively well-fed United States, could scarcely have imagined, the narratives of modern food tourism not only graduate from the alimentary to the strictly culinary, but, in assuming that food is always already provided,

no longer serve as a prelude to eating itself--as, for instance, in the reading of restaurant menus.¹

At the same time, this apparent disappearance of hunger and the general functionality of food from travel/tourist narratives produces certain shifts in the relationship of food to national identity. Near-starvation on a long sea voyage to the South Pacific could only have produced a culinary fantasy reduced to its bare minimum: longing for food of any kind, but preferably one's customary local or domestic diet. The nation becomes a place in which, even if hunger is not uncommon, its assuaging requires no added estrangement. But a contemporary vacation to Hawaii or Bali, by contrast, already obeys a radically altered mode of culinary fantasy: one in which satiety replaces hunger but also one in which cuisine itself displaces the merely alimentary, thus highlighting the perceived absence of the former in the United States. And here it becomes precisely the felt lack of a national cuisine or positive food identity in the U.S. that calls forth a new—sharply dislocalized—class of food adventure stories in which, as I will show, national borders are redrawn yet again, and an “American” way of eating is constructed on a seemingly global terrain. But before we look at the way in which these contemporary narratives redraw (and thus shore up) national borders, it becomes important to consider how and why the notion of the threatening erasure of these borders itself takes shape.

¹ Contemporary narratives about polar expeditions such as Sarah Wheeler's *Terra Incognita: Travels in Antarctica* and David Campbell's *Crystal Desert: Summers in Antarctica* still retain much of these risky and dangerous aspects, but even these lament the onset of tourism in polar zones. Campbell for example discusses the spoiling of natural surrounding by whaling and sealing.

The End(s) of Authenticity

Anxiety of Disappearance and the Domestic Space

A large part of what makes food, together with travel and tourism, the subject of far-ranging cultural analysis and critique is its vulnerability to standardization. U.S. fast-food companies such as McDonald's have indeed made huge amounts of money by consistently producing homogeneous and standardized food experiences. Alan Bryman in "Theme parks and McDonaldization" has argued that "McDonaldization" as both a paradigm and a metaphor for food standardization can be extended as a term to the sphere of equally standardized tourism experiences, such as those of Disney Parks. In their essay "'McDisneyization' and 'Post-Tourism'" George Ritzer and Allan Liska, for example, take issue with John Urry, who questions the McDonaldization argument and suggests that standardized items such as package-tours might be on the decline. They argue "raised in McDonaldized systems, accustomed to a daily life in those systems, most people not only accept, but embrace those systems" (100). Though Ritzer and Liska raise this issue primarily as a way to intervene in the conversations about tourists seeking "new experiences," the fact that much of the activity of tourism takes the form of organized and prepackaged systems has also come to permeate popular discourse on tourism.

In analogous ways, the export by U.S. companies of standardized food production is a topic of much contention within the debates about globalization, and has been a topic of chief concern in recent World Trade Organization meetings. Among the important issues in these debates are U.S. (as well as European) trade policies, the new role of biotechnology firms in the food industry, government, agribusiness, and the standardized methods of farming required for the production of genetically modified food around the

world.² Even the popular news media are paying increased attention to the way in which food standardization is reaching new levels. For example, a recent ABC network series aired on September 1st 2002, *In Search of America*, hosted by Peter Jennings, shows how the Frito Lay Company is expanding into Europe and Asia employing local people as managers and buying and maintaining farms to produce a standardized potato for the company. Company executives openly maintained in the series that their goal was to turn the world population into consumers of Frito Lay potato chips. So blatant is the Frito Lay strategy, that even a mainstream network like ABC evokes some skepticism, as Jennings asks people in China if they would really give up their normal snacking habits eating nuts and dried fruit to eat potato chips. He finds some skeptics and some enthusiasts. As a U.S. company in search of big chunks of market share and earnings Frito Lay, a division of Pepsico is not an isolated case. U.S. or U.S.-style food is already firmly established on the streets of Shanghai, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, and many other parts of the world where until recently eating habits and life-styles were relatively unaffected by U.S.-led food standardization.³

It is significant, however, that even in the above *In Search of America* program the identification of a standardized U.S. food product with the idea of a U.S. national cuisine remains fraught and ambiguous. Though U.S. food companies such as Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut, TGIF can be found across the globe, the idea of a U.S. national cuisine is, in fact, much contested. For example, the prominent U.S. anthropologist

² For a lengthy discussion of genetically modified food and standardized farming look at José Bové and François Defour's *The World is Not For Sale: Farmers Against Junk Food*.

³ More research needs to be done on the consumption of U.S. food around the world. Anecdotally, in some cases it becomes a way establishing prestige and status by association with U.S. And in the case of those nations where this is a recent phenomenon such as China, it also consumed as a novelty, and sometimes as a snack for children while the "real" food is consumed at home.

Sidney Mintz relates in his book *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom* that the idea of American cuisine is, at the very least, suspect. He tells us how his statement that the U.S. does not have a national cuisine, delivered during a class lecture, generated responses to the effect that being able to eat Thai, Italian, or Chinese food in the U.S. makes these cuisines American. Mintz argues that the idea of cuisine in other nations is more connected to seasonal foods and reflects a closer relationship between growers and eaters than exists in the U.S. At best, the U.S. has some regional cuisine and any “local variation in cuisine is under continuous pressure from commercial enterprise aimed at profiting by turning into a national fad every localized taste opportunity” (114). Products that don’t travel well, according to Mintz, are altered in order to be made “available elsewhere, even if they no longer are (or taste like) what they were at home” (114). In Mintz’s account, this empty domestic space, ready to be filled--but only with marketing opportunities, not with food experiences-- is only one of the many explanations for the lack of a genuine national culinary tradition in the U.S.

In the other instances of dislocalism that I have discussed in previous chapters, I have tried to show how various institutional and literary practices, such as American immigrant literature or American travel writing, contribute to preserving (even if loosely) defined and already existing national boundaries. But the case of food and cuisine is unusual in this context, since, as Mintz (and others) points out, food as a domestic, American space appears to be largely an empty one. Not only has the domestic space of the United States in relationship to food lacked the kind of cohesiveness found in food traditions of other nations such as Italy, France, Thailand, Indonesia, and Mexico. The American palate itself has often been perceived to be a kind of *tabula rasa* onto which

the grafting of other food traditions has consequently become a relatively easy task. The very sense of a lack seems to make possible the idea that eating, as one chooses, Thai, Chinese or Italian food is *itself* American in form.

What I intend to show here, vis a vis food and dislocalism, is how food tourism narratives seek to both construct through and project onto this empty space an imagined national food tradition, but also take peculiar advantage of this empty space to adapt and affirm new forms of American identity as simultaneously global and local. However, such attempts at establishing a kind of local food identity in terms of the food traditions of the U.S. present particular problems, since it must also contend with the widespread perception of the U.S. as producer of standardized, mediocre food experiences in stark opposition to local and “authentic” food cultures or new food experiences. Immanuel Wallerstein in theorizing the idea of a “world culture” points to the fact “there is a dialectic of creating simultaneously a homogeneous world and distinctive national cultures within this world” and “the creating of simultaneously homogeneous national cultures and distinctive ethnic groups or minorities within these nation-states.” (“The National and the Universal,” 99). What Wallerstein points to here is a standard tendency in the context of globalization that perceived homogeneity is accompanied by a search for heterogeneity and novelty.

It should be noted that the opposition to the “inauthentic” food cultures of the U.S. comes in good measure from those who champion the preservation, and lament the erasure, of cultural food traditions. The search for food authenticity in direct relation to cultural-nationalist paradigms seems, in a world where things are not only standardized but also mixed (for example, Korean-Japanese-Italian fusion cuisine in New York), to be

a way to infuse newness and variety. The concept of authenticity has often seemed essential in distinguishing one food experience from another: whatever an American cuisine or palate may or may not be, it is not what one consumes in Chinese restaurants. And national-cultural traditions are seen as unquestionable receptacles of such authenticity—as if nations themselves had a taste. Given this, the food tourism narratives that I will examine seem to perform a multifold task: they establish themselves as against the standardization narrative, looking for reaffirmation of American identity and newness through both authentic and hybridized food experiences. They present globalization as a structure that produces sameness and yet at the same time makes variety, difference, and authenticity possible. It is as if the idea of an American cuisine, even though seeming to lack any referent, could, merely by being placed in a relationship to the myriad of national and local culinary authenticities, persuade us of its possibility, that it is something to be searched out. In this project, food tourism narratives often enlist the help of anthropological and ethnographic discourses and practices, even tapping into that discipline's own contemporary conversations about what has been termed the "crisis" of anthropology.

Ethnographic Form

Though anthropological ethnography shares its borders with travel writing, cultural studies, and literary studies among others, it has, according to James Clifford, held onto the notions of dwelling intensely, learning local languages, and producing "deep" interpretation. Exploring the idea of "fieldwork as travel encounters" (*Routes*, 67), Clifford has shown how the borders of ethnographic practices increasingly merge with those of travelers in general, including those of tourists. Indeed, ethnographic practices

are no longer confined within the bounds of the social science disciplines themselves, as Renato Rosaldo has suggested in *Culture and Truth* (1997). They have become part of a number of genres, including mass-media narratives and storytelling in general. The form of ethnography also serves as a model of research, reportage and narrative for food tourism, as it seeks to obtain and present new information about other cultures and nations. Discussions within anthropology about the relevance of the discipline for contemporary globalizing conditions also, ironically, point towards the question of food. For example, Johan Pottier in *Anthropology of Food* (1999) states that “Exploring anthropology’s rich repertoire of empirical and analytical contributions to the study of agrarian change and food security is one way in which anthropologists may respond to the growing awareness that what threatens the discipline is not a crisis of representation, but a problem of relevance” (7). He further argues that anthropology can invigorate itself through a focus on food and globalization. “It not too late for anthropology,” he claims, and states that anthropology has “been on the forefront of debate” regarding “food and food policy in the 1990s” (8). According to Pottier “the discipline also injected new life into the debate on free market policy and real markets [...] and of late has offered new insights into the problems of biodiversity” (8). Claiming that “in the world of food, agriculture and food policy, anthropology has found a way of coping with intellectual certainty” Pottier positions the discipline as one “fit to provide guidance in a fast-changing world” (9). The dislocalism apparent in this attempt to present anthropology as able to retool itself in relationship to issues of food globalization resonates in surprising ways with the dislocalism of food tourism narratives. Food seems remarkably capable of

functioning, on an intellectual and symbolic plane, as either nature or culture, depending on which category is most useful at the moment.

Still, it must be emphasized that it is only the ethnographic form that food tourism narratives borrow from anthropology, for the latter not only discusses tastes and food preferences but also issues of globalization that affect people ranging from producers of food to those eating it. In addition, anthropology has used food categories to attempt rigorous analysis of cultural patterns. Claude Lévi-Strauss (*The Raw and Cooked*) and Mary Douglas (*Purity and Danger*) employ these categories to analyze myths and ideas about food in order to study patterns of distinction, hierarchy and social customs. I will show that U.S. food tourism narratives are primarily interested in the description of food and of taste, but make a gesture towards “culturalizing” this experience in order to produce the idea of separate cultures and nations.

Food tourism can also be shown to re-stage in unexpected ways another key moment of contemporary anthropology: the so-called crisis of representation. When anthropology, led by critical voices such as that of Clifford Geertz, moved in the direction of the narrativizing and interpretation of culture as opposed to merely describing cultural patterns, it provided the field with new forms of producing anthropological knowledge. In what seems an analogous way, the narrativizing of food practices around the world is an attempt to infuse newness and find the authentic in the familiar experiences of both food and tourism. Rosaldo’s own descriptions of the displacement of the classic forms of ethnographic production to include emotions, experiences and storytelling finds a rough parallel in the narratives of food tourism, here primarily as a way of positioning the U.S. as simultaneously a global and a local place.

But let us turn now to the narratives themselves to examine how this production of the U.S. as both global and local takes place.

Filling the Gap or Narrating the Nation

Ruth Reichl's collection *Endless Feasts: Sixty Years of Writing from Gourmet* (appearing in 2002 through Condé Nast Publications Inc.—also the publishers for the magazine) is part of the series of “The Modern Library of the World’s Best Books” on the occasion of *Gourmet* magazine’s sixtieth anniversary. *Endless Feasts* features writing from such authors as Edna O’Brien, Madhur Jaffrey, Ray Bradbury and Paul Theroux, comprising a collection that Reichl refers to in her introduction to the volume as “sample tidbits of the many riches still hidden in the archives of the magazine.” About Earle MacAusland, the founder of the *Gourmet*, she writes: “In conceiving America’s first epicurean magazine, he thought big. In a time when food was not considered big, he believed it was the only one” (x).

Published for a class of reader whom it referred to as the “sophisticated epicurean,” *Gourmet* harkens back to definitions not unlike that of Brillat-Savarin regarding a related term: “Gourmandism is an act of judgment, by which we give preference to those things which are agreeable to our taste over those which are not” (*The Philosopher in the Kitchen*). But *Gourmet* seems to have lost the exclusivity of being the discerning magazine for an elite audience. Reichl describes it as a magazine that “roamed the world long before it had been shrunk to its current size by the speed of jets” and whose writers were asked to “venture far and send back reports from the front” (x). But in presenting *Gourmet* as a forerunner, already long ago doing what is considered new today, *Endless Feasts* must also deal with the fact that not only the size of the world

but the size of *Gourmet*'s share of the food publication market has been shrunk. From being the only publication of its kind sixty years ago, *Gourmet* has become only a part of a myriad of how-to magazines, cookbooks and television shows that feature everything from recipes to articles and programming about the contemporary fusion of flavors, the excitement of discovering trendy and elegant restaurants in one's neighborhoods and the exotic ingredients found in local grocery stores.

Endless Feasts, however, is hardly concerned with providing how-to knowledge about cuisine. As Reichl states, "In later years, the food magazines would come to rely on recipes, but in [founder] MacAusland's *Gourmet* they did not hold pride of place" (x). Instead, "in looking back, what stands out is the breadth of the coverage and the quality of writing" (x). Given the fact that *Gourmet*'s articles are marketed to readers who can, it is claimed, "use the magazine to live a destination, becoming part of the local culture by following in the writer's footsteps" (Amazon.com magazine subscriptions: *Gourmet*) it is all the more interesting that *Endless Feasts* promotes itself in opposition to the how-to aspect of the magazine, almost as if it were establishing a new, "*Gourmet*" genre, a writing about food that is also quasi-travel writing, quasi-literary and fictional. On the inside of the dust-jacket appears a list of other works part in the Modern Library series, most of them literary "classics": Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and many more. The established reputation and canonical imprimatur of the Modern Library collection—a veritable menu for the seasoned literary "gourmet"—helps consolidate the identity of *Gourmet* with its declared affinity for Brillat-Savarin's definition of gourmandism, an identity now threatened by the onset of the mass-media food narratives. But in order to

differentiate *Gourmet* from other such publications, *Endless Feasts* must try to bestow a literary quality on a rather vexed project: establishing a U.S. culinary history, or what Reichl refers to as an “ongoing history of our national adventures at the table” (xi). Reichl suggests a history that is in flux by stating that “American food is a constantly changing representation of who we are” but, overdetermined as it is by the effort to canonize *Gourmet*, the effect is to render history as something static, a sort of food-inflected version of an “invented tradition.”

In the world of food magazines to suit every taste, and with fusion cuisine seeming to making it harder to narrate food within nationalist paradigms at all, *Endless Feasts*’ narratives are placed exclusively within such paradigms. The narratives themselves, dating from the 1930s to 2000, are categorized into a number of sections. The one entitled “Gourmet Travels” primarily contains stories written by Americans about food experiences they have had abroad. The “American Scene” is comprised of narratives about U.S. regional food culture. “Personalities of Gourmets” focuses on figures such as MFK Fisher and James Beard as American icons. “Matters of Taste” and “On Foods and Cooking” house narratives that relate varied experiences about cooking and ingredients in the U.S. While gesturing toward the gourmand’s cosmopolitan enjoyment of food around the globe, *Endless Feasts* insinuates that the U.S. is much like European, Asian and Latin American countries, in the sense that it has a history of its own particular cuisine and is just another part of the globe in questions of food production and preparation. Here we find the familiar attempt to consolidate national boundaries and at the same time promote newness and variety. In travel stories such as those by Ruth Harkness and MFK Fisher, their food experiences in Mexico and

Switzerland assume those national characteristics and work to produce the U.S. as a distinct nation. Yet, the stories about American regional foods produce the U.S. as a nation with diverse food preparation and consumption patterns. These categories of food stories from abroad and those from the U.S. regions together with an emphasis on quasi-literary writing within a structure of travel and mobility becomes part of a dislocalizing strategy whereby the seemingly innocent recounting of food narratives along national and regional lines works to border off the U.S. from other nations.

The quasi-fictional project of narrating U.S. culinary history benefits greatly by deploying the popularized notion of literature as something timeless.⁴ The cliché that suggests that discerning readers prefer older fictional works by writers such as Twain, Bronte, and Conrad, once ahead of their time but of course still relevant as ever, works to the advantage of *Endless Feasts* by helping to flatten out historical time periods that have themselves produced changes in food practices and on *Gourmet* over the years. Rather than submit to historicization, national and regional boundaries are treated as something a priori, placing *Gourmet* in a privileged position as narrator of a U.S. food history. By deploying the cliché of timeless literature, Reichl's introduction seems able to bestow a timeless quality on *Gourmet* magazine itself, one that protects it from historical change rather than acknowledging it. The cover of the book itself is an example of the way in which style and visual narrative achieve this effect. In an understated beige color background and an off-white, dark shadow-casting plate, the visual effect here is quite different from that employed in most contemporary cooking books or magazine covers, with their sleek designs and colorful and artful presentations of food. The rusty looking

⁴ See chapter 1 for a discussion of how management theorists employ the idea of literature as timeless for dislocal purposes.

fork on the plate, also with its accompanying shadow, works together with the rest of the color scheme to produce a faintly nostalgic effect, an effect of a distant but still intimate past. Here the link between discerning readers of literature and discerning gourmets is given directly visual-narrative form. Moreover, despite the seemingly innocent format whereby entries appear in roughly chronological order, with only a publication date appended at the end, the collection as a whole works to flatten out at least three significant historical periods: the older narratives reflect a period in which gourmet travel was something available only to a wealthy elite; narratives written somewhat later reflect a set of more popularly available food experiences only possible in the wake of post-sixties changes in immigration policies; and more or less contemporary entries reflect the current conditions of globalization that have given rise to food experiences such as fusion and the increasing difficulty of narrating food along national lines. It is as if *Gourmet*, and its ideal reader, were themselves unaffected by these changes. But let us now examine these periodized narratives more closely.

Unlike earlier nineteenth century travel writings by Twain or Melville, *Endless Feasts*' entries from the 1940s and the 1950s--such as MFK Fisher's "Three Swiss Inns" (1941) and Ruth Harkness' "In a Tibetan Lamasery" (1944) and "Mexican Morning" (1947)--all describe food as pleasurable and one of the primary reasons for travel. These authors narrate their food and travel experiences within the framework of adventure, mystery and intrigue and rely on some of the strategies of narration typical of the travel writing at the time in constructing a faraway world of food cultures. And since their readers would likely never get to taste such foods themselves, their narrative quality becomes extremely crucial.

Ruth Harkness' story "Mexican Morning" relates her experience in the kitchen of an inn she stays at in the village of Tamazanchales: "when I became sufficiently familiar with the inn to be accepted by its Oriental mistress, the Indian cook, and barefoot, brown-skinned girls who pat-patted the tortillas in the dim Mexican kitchen, I was permitted to witness the mysteries and rites that produced the tongue-tingling *salsas de chile* to which our commercial chili sauce is a very pale cousin" (23). While producing credibility for herself by suggesting that she had to *earn* her entry into the kitchen, much as ethnographers must do in order to be able to observe the culture they are studying, Harkness simultaneously adopts an outsider's lens in order to be credible with her U.S. readers. The description combines elements of fiction and ethnography in the juxtaposing of the Oriental mistress, the Indian cook and the barefoot-brown-skinned girls that participate in mysterious rites. It not only allows her to represent them from a distance but also produces a sense of intrigue. The mildly glib reference to the "mysteries and rites" of the local salsa, "cousin" to its "pale" counterpart on the supermarket shelves in the U.S., not only works to reproduce the difference between the U.S. and Mexico but also places commercialized food in opposition to the concept of authenticity that in fact must remain "mysterious" if one is to be able to narrate such food experiences within these frames. Elements of classic ethnographic reporting with their underlying representation of cultures that are contained within themselves, appear in an indiscriminate manner to emphasize locality while at the same time giving Harkness a narrative alibi for actual travel in order to witness the rites. And despite the fact that Fifth Avenue shops in New York were full of "Mexican embroideries" and "pottery"--in fact one "heard and saw nothing but Mexico" in New York--one must nevertheless go there

for authenticity. The ethnographized travel narrative is necessary to produce the effect of history, a history that in turn seals up this narrative within itself as an experience not only unavailable to people who do not travel to Mexico but also, potentially, unavailable to those who do. And the fictional aspect of this narrative, presented as being as much about travel as about food, guarantees the fact that even if the reader traces Harkness' trajectory, in an effort to emulate a gourmet, s/he is not guaranteed the same experiences. Harkness' other travel story, "In a Tibetan Lamasery," relates the rituals of tea and food in another "faraway" location and is delivered in much the same way, as a product, almost, of chance. Some tourists are mentioned but tourism is easily dismissed because it would tend to negate the idea of an experience essentially unavailable to the reader. The date at the end of this narrative, as in the case of the others, gestures toward locking the story within the past, yet it is simultaneously vouchsafed as timeless by bestowing a historical quality on it.

Fisher's "Three Swiss Inns" works in a similar manner, highlighting the magical quality of her food experiences in Switzerland. She relates the experience of eating a pea dish claiming that all she can "remember now is hot unsalted butter"--notwithstanding which she "can almost see it, smell it taste it now" (6). She, too, renders this experience unrepeatable and unavailable to anyone else, here by saying that she could "never copy it, nor could anyone alive, probably" (6). This kind of exclusivity clearly situates food experiences within the boundaries of specific nations.

The readers of *Gourmet* likely did not need convincing that there are novel culinary experiences to be had outside the U.S., but the writers for the magazine featured in *Endless Feasts* clearly knew that their audience would need to be shown that the U.S.

was also a place for authentic, gourmet food experiences. While food experiences outside of the U.S. could fairly easily and believably be attributed to a distinct national character, however, this attribution evidently was to prove more refractory in the case of the U.S.

Though distinct historical forces have always produced regional foods, recently the ideas of regionality and locality have taken on a different sort of significance. Barbara and James Shortridge, in the Introduction to their edited collection, *The Taste of American Place*, attribute a renewed interest in what they call “neolocalism” because of the fast paced lifestyle that has eroded a sense of community producing a “commitment to experiencing things close to home” (7). Contemporary regionalism and localism in relationship to food emphasizing “local” ingredients is often politically positioned against the global trends of genetic modification, use of pesticides, and standardization. And “local” foods need not be produced “close to home.” In fact “local” foods are marketed and sold to consumers living far way from the “originary” site of harvest and preparation.

Though regional history is largely missing from *Endless Feasts*, the collection secures national boundaries through stories of diverse regional foods. The entries by Frank Schoonmaker, on California wines, and by Robert Coffin, on food in Maine, suggest, as we shall see shortly in more detail, that this required a kind of synecdoche—a narrativizing of the regional-- in which local cuisines and food experiences could stand in for the (missing) whole.

Setting itself the task of putting the U.S. on the map of cuisine, Schoonmaker’s “The Vine Dies Hard” (1941) provides an almost historical account of California wine production. The tone here is strictly *Gourmet*—discerning and cosmopolitan—but

unapologetic, optimistic and gingerly patriotic. “Since 1936 and 1937,” writes Schoonmaker, “the situation [for California wines] has changed remarkably and for the better. [...] This country for just and valid reasons condemned the California wines that were being marketed in 1934 and 1935. For no less just and valid reasons we should now welcome with open arms the California wines which are being produced today” (108). Words such as “just and valid reasons” and “should” seem curiously out of place in the lexicon of gourmandism—almost as if one had the duty to partake of food and drink one already knew to be superior. Wine-drinking readers of *Gourmet* are being gently lectured here to be more open-minded about a non-European vintage when it happens to spring from the native soil itself. What is missing from this quasi-historical account (or from of *Endless Feasts*) is the effect of Prohibition on the California wine industry. Repairing the wine business after Prohibition was lifted would indeed require pleas to potential consumers.⁵ In Schoonmaker’s narrative “California”—a mediational place name that stands mid-way between Mexico or Tibet and, say, a suburban American supermarket—works much better, exploiting a subtle form of dislocalism that continues to function to this day.

But not all the featured narratives in *Endless Feasts* are so overt in cajoling and coaxing readers into leaving aside conventional ideas about American food and

⁵ For more detailed histories of California wine industries see James T. Lapsley’s *Bottled poetry: Napa Winemaking from Prohibition to the Modern Era* (1996) and Thomas Pinney’s *A History of Wine in America: From the Beginnings to Prohibition* (1989).

conceding that a familiar, domestic environment could make for good culinary experiences. Consider the following passage from Coffin's "Night of Lobster" (1946): "The pail boiled over fiercely for the third time. This time the lobsterman let it boil. Then he poured the lobsters out bright red in the glow of what coals were left. He kicked on a whole new heap of brush. The fire danced up, sprinkling the night with wild stars. It was light as day (113)." The strategy here is evidently to exoticize a local, domestic food by slightly de-familiarizing and, in effect, over-narrativizing the *site* of the culinary experience. Maine becomes a place like Mexico, Tibet or Switzerland not just because lobsters are caught, cooked and eaten there, but because these activities become, literally, part of a ritualistic pyrotechnic exercise. In what seems almost an unwitting pastiche of surrealism, lobsters become a starry night. While for the contemporary reader a title such as "Night of Lobster" might suggest a grade B horror movie or a Stephen King short story, for Coffin lobster at night is an epiphany, almost supernatural: "It was a night like a night of marriage. I shall remember it all my days. I hope I shall remember it, too, beyond even those" (114).

One would think, from reading *Endless Feasts*, that lobster, prior to *Gourmet's* discovery of it, had been a well-kept culinary secret of the remote New England coast. But in fact, prior to becoming the delicacy it is considered today, Maine lobster was anything but an exotic food commodity, often purchased in cans (Burnham & Morrill Company, a cannery in Maine, was beginning to can lobster meat as early as the 1830s) and commonly eaten as a protein substitute during World War II, when it was one of the few non-rationed meats. (Consumption of lobster after the war actually dropped because of this, although it rose again soon afterwards.) Moreover, its initial appearance on the

U.S. market outside its local fishing waters coincided with the early history of food standardization in the U.S. in which the canned and packaged foods produced by companies such as Heinz, Armour, Swift, Kellogg and Post were shipped all over the country by rail and sold in massive quantities.⁶ In addition, as George Lewis states in “The Maine Lobster as Regional Icon,” a wealthy new national elite in the 1800s who began to buy “land in order to establish summer homes in coastal places such as Bar Harbor, Boothbay, Kennebunkport and Camden” could buy lobsters from local fisherman and eat it fresh boiled instead of from a can—something available only to summer vacationers. Thus lobster in this context is seen both as the food of the “poor Maine local” and a “wealthy summer resident” (66).

None of this historical context enters into Coffin’s 1946 narrative (when, in fact, it was still fresh) nor does it enter into the meta-narrative of *Endless Feasts* as a whole. Were it to do so, of course, it would make much less aesthetically credible Coffin’s once-in-a-life-time experience eating a “meat as hot as a spruce bonfire and as sweet as a boy’s first love” (113). The references to starry night and boyhood speak only to the upper class association with lobster. The especially curious and suggestive thing here is that, in order to coax it into being an American tradition of authentic cuisine, a food that was also once regarded as inferior with a history of industrial packaging and mass distribution must have this history erased and then undergo a kind of re-localizing and hyper-aestheticizing in order to take its place on the menu of national delicacies and authentic, non-standardized food experiences.

⁶ For a lengthier discussion of the history of food production companies see Harvey Levenstein’s *Revolution at the Table* (2003).

In the past three decades, *Gourmet* stories have come to reflect the post-sixties environment in its food stories and recipes. But in *Endless Feasts* this too is presented in a curiously de-historicized manner, even as a gesture is made towards historicizing. Only in Reichl's introduction, in fact, is it casually acknowledged that *Gourmet* ever found itself obliged to change with the times: "In the later years the magazine would give Laurie Colwin a place to write about the pleasures of home cooking and would encourage writers like Madhur Jaffrey, Anita Loos and Claudia Roden to look back at the way they once were (xi)." Laurie Colwin's piece in *Endless Feasts*, entitled "A Harried Cook's Guide to Some Fast Food," was written, however, only in 1992. It relates how Colwin could not continue to cook leisurely meals after her daughter was born and came up with some fast food recipes for convenience's sake she calls the "cooking of the refined slob" (320). This story, prompted in obvious ways by questions of professional or career women in the kitchen and the changing character of domestic labor in the home, then gets placed together with Claudia Roden's "An Arabian Picnic" and Anita Loos' "Cocktail Parties of the Twenties," both written in the 1970s. Roden, an immigrant from Egypt, reminisces about such foods as falafel and pilav. Loos nostalgically relates cocktail parties of the 1920s frequented by James Cagney and Humphrey Bogart as "marked by an ambience of great virility." Referring to her own novel-turned-into-film *Gentleman Prefer Blondes*, she bemoans that "gentlemen have begun to prefer gentlemen" because "ladies no longer dress as incentive to romance" (157-8). Reichl then makes a fairly obvious attempt at "historicizing" but without actually paying attention to historical details, either regarding the change in the codes of gender and sexuality or issues of immigration and ethnicity in the context of food.⁷ Though Reichl mentions that *Gourmet*

⁷ These stories fall into the additive approach to multiculturalism that I have discussed in the second

opened test kitchens in 1965 and Jaffrey's and Roden's stories contain recipes, by setting these articles next to Colwin's, *Gourmet* conveniently writes out of the history and the political changes of the "sixties," relating to class, gender and ethnicity and through them to food as well. If, in fact, it could be argued that the North American palate underwent a sea-change that was, if not "national" in its origins, national in its scope, one cannot learn much about this from *Endless Feasts*, which is already invested in the idea of an authentic national (if necessarily regionalized) cuisine.

In any case, writings from the 1970s featured in the collection renew this investment in a native U.S. cuisine, despite a major influx of food practices from newer immigrants. James Villas, in "Down in the Low Country" (1973) writes about the 275 mile coastal region that extends from Wilmington, North Carolina, to Savannah, Georgia, identifying it as "one of the nation's most remote and mysterious areas" (168). Villas goes to lengths to give this region of the country an aura of the remote but at the same time of the local. It is, for Villas (much like Maine is for Coffin) a place that "evokes vivid childhood memories," thus both distancing in relation to a biographical time sealing it within the intimate localism of childhood (168). There are geographical and historical accounts of the development of the cotton industry and of rice cultivation in the region, along with ethnographic nuggets about the inhabitants' food consumption patterns. The story highlights the availability of fresh seafood and include recipes for items such as oyster stew, barbequed spare-ribs, and low country shrimp pilau that do emphasize

chapter where many of the immigrant groups were seen as making the contribution to the U.S. in terms of the food cultures they brought. In fact many literary novels published by "ethnic" writers contained a number of recipes in them. See for example Jade Snow Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter* (1950) and Monica Sone's *Nisei Daughter* (1952). This is also set in the context of changing ethnographic practices whereby the "natives" are allowed to tell their own stories. In fact the food narratives today that continue to place food traditions within a national context are largely the ones that include stories about immigrants bringing their food from the nation they emigrated from to the U.S. in a simple trajectory of taking from one nation and adding to another.

regional patterns of cooking and eating but not include the histories of say, migration and farming that are inextricably linked to food in this region. History, in this narrative thus becomes merely decorative rather than something that could help us understand food and its consumption in the U.S.

Providing still further instances of a pseudo-historicizing narrative strategy that might be termed the reproduction of the past in the present, the contemporary entries in *Endless Feasts* also plot food within structures of romance and intrigue. Here, however, the dislocalism of the collection, in which the juxtaposing on the same discursive plane of foreign national food experiences with ethnographized accounts of regional cuisine in the U.S. serves to “nationalize” the latter, becomes even more acute. For, given that the ever greater globalization of the world capitalist economy has diffused “local” foods of the most diverse kind throughout metropolitan spaces in the U.S., it becomes correspondingly more difficult to narrate the more pronounced “fusion” of food along national/regional lines. Even such natural determinants of distinct national and regional cuisines as the local food-growing environment and growing seasons come to influence less and less what “local” ingredients are available to consumers—at least in the wealthiest parts of the world, where publications such as *Gourmet* are likely to find readers. Nevertheless, the impulse to construct and reproduce a U.S. national identity formation through food remains as strong—if not stronger—than ever.

Irene Corbally Kuhn’s story, “Shangahi: The Vintage Years,” originally published in *Gourmet* in 1986, serves as a particularly interesting example of the way in which *Endless Feasts* reproduces the past in the present. At first, it would seem, Kuhn moves against the grain of the older narratives of *Endless Feasts* on the “then” and the “now.”

She starts her story by arguing that Shanghai, once known as the “Paris of the Orient,” now exists only in the Western imagination as “the essence of exoticism, excitement, color and vitality persisting through wars, revolutions, and decades of isolation” (74). “Vintage Shanghai,” the city that epitomized these qualities, “actually existed,” she reminds us, for only a very short period of time, “during the years between the end of World I and the capture of the Chinese part of the city by the Japanese in 1937” (74).

But note here that, underneath its evidently more cautious form of periodization, the once vibrant milieu of Shanghai is not to be derived for Kuhn from fusion cuisine or the mixing of ethnicities and nationalities—the current meaning of the “exotic” in much new-wave popular food discourse—but rather from a kind of imperialist nostalgia for the days when a Westerner was “once privileged to call himself a Shanghaileander,” when the British presence produced a “police force of tall, straight-spined turbaned Sikhs,” and when there was a “dazzling array of choices, for restaurants abounded and ranged from the elegant formality of the St. Petersburg, owned and managed by a former white Russian cavalry officer, to the small dark, steamy noodle shops of the old Chinese walled city” (77). Kuhn’s “vintage” years were the ones during which a (Western) foreigner could count on segregated dining spaces to which Chinese were denied entry, while still partaking of the mystery and intrigue of the noodle houses. “There was,” she declares with open admiration, “an easy mixing among the nationalities composing the foreign population” (76). Her rueful acknowledgement that “even as we lived those days, somewhere deep below our consciousness we sensed that this was a life that would never exist again” declares the past to be past, but only so as to denigrate the present (81). Nowhere does “Shanghai: the Vintage Years” so much as gesture towards what has

replaced this life. As I will show a bit later, at least in terms of cuisine Shanghai's streets are experimenting with food just as much as any other big city. Although perhaps the foreign population these days, now in the form of businessmen with investment prospects in a capitalist and modernizing China, does not enjoy the luxury of segregated restaurants and night clubs. Kuhn, in effect accepts, with one hand, the contemporary world of fusion food and the corresponding diffusion of national cuisines, while, with the other, she projects it back into a nostalgic past in which the exotic blend was a privilege set aside for the Western gourmards and colonials who could call themselves, to repeat here that strangely appropriate linguistic hybrid, "Shanghailanders." The idea, as important to *Gourmet* as ever, of a "true" national cuisine to heal the wounded sensibilities of Yankee gourmets begins to look less like a foray to Maine, New Orleans, Savannah or the Napa Valley and more like a domestic colonial enclave, with walls to keep it from being "shanghai-ed" by the immigrant hordes crowding into the land with their strange looks and ways. It's one thing to eat their food, another to have to sit next to them.

Pat Conroy's "The Roman of Umbria" (1992) dislocalizes the threatening non-identity of American food in still a different, though more familiar way. His story is about how he took his wife on a honeymoon to Umbria. She occupies the role of the "provincial" American--a kind of food virgin--while he, a man of the world, leads her into faraway gardens of earthly delights: "It amazed me," he relates that "though, she traveled to London twice, [she] had never drifted over to continental Europe, where our language is put out to pasture. Not to have traveled widely seemed unlucky to me, but not to have seen Italy seemed heartbreaking and unimaginable" (84). In this narrative, knowing Italy is also knowing food. But while Umbria inspires him to speak of "albino-

faced cauliflowers,” “porcini mushrooms,” “fennels,” etc., the more cautious reader notes that, in 1992, these are ingredients that are no longer unfamiliar to the middle and upper middle class (the likely readers of *Gourmet*) who largely live in, and even never leave the U.S. Have, in some ways as a result of global food—and human—traffic, parts of the U.S. become Italy? In a far less obvious, less conscious sense, that, too, would be “heartbreaking and unimaginable.” But by framing this as a tale of romance and the beginning of a new life together, new love becomes new food, and thus, through this scarcely noticeable displacement, keeps Italy and the U.S. at a safe distance from each other. Conroy’s story here seems to have far more in common with Coffin’s story about the romance of lobsters in Maine in the 1940s than with the trendy cuisine of today—in which, for example, one might discover recipes combining Maine lobster and Italian herbs. Both indirectly eroticize food as a way of distracting attention from its increasing obsolescence as a vehicle for cultural-nationalist experience. Placed in the same volume, they suggest a world in which eating (like sex) seems to take place outside the history that includes such things as immigration and famines, but safely inside national borders.

The contemporary narratives about the U.S. are written in much the same vein. And narrativization here too becomes an important device for seeing routine experiences in a new, culturally “nationalizable” light. Many of them offer an East Coast perspective on various regions of the U.S. far enough away to require travel. In “All Aboard! Crossing the Rockies in Style” (1995) our old friend Paul Theroux is once again on a train, *The Los Angeles*, heading west on a coast-to-coast trip to Los Angeles. Along the way we hear quaint information about the various places that he passes through: Princeton, Illinois is the “pig capital of the world” and Galesburg, Illinois is the place

“where popcorn was invented by Olmstead Ferris.” Implying his own traveler’s extra-territoriality, Theroux likens the Midwest to another, legendary setting for long train trips: “I was put in the mind of Russia, of long journeys through forests and prairies ... It was like that, the size of the landscape, and the snow and the darkness, and the starry nights over Iowa” (185-6). While he mentions local towns with filling stations, or a bowling alley particular to a Mid-western city, these places nevertheless seem as far-flung to him as Siberian villages. He later asks Christopher Kyte, the owner of the restaurant aboard *The Los Angeles* about his oddest customers. Their conversation turns from the odd dining habits of a person who showed up without clothes for breakfast to another man who, sedate during the day, drank too much at night, when he wore wigs and did cartwheels. Listening in on these droll anecdotes about people’s dining habits, set against the backdrop of “small nameless towns” across the U.S., one gets a sense of watching them unfold in an unfamiliar terrain. And Theroux’s description of the food on the train as “Southern cooking with a difference” and “traditional dishes” that are “served with a flourish” further infuses the bland backdrop of nameless towns with an aesthetic aura of newness (189).

Such dislocalizing through de-familiarization, much in the same way that older narratives presented the U.S. with a “new look” that nevertheless leaves many contemporary conditions out of the picture, here requires some re-visiting. I have already discussed this form of dislocalism in relationship to Theroux’s emphasis on train travel as a kind of planned obsolescence that diminishes the hyper-velocity of tourist traffic and allows the aesthetic dimension of travel, supposedly, to be resuscitated. But the metaphor of mobility has renewed its importance in a different context in part due to its relationship

to food narratives. By adding food—as already observed, an “aesthetic” (or at least, aestheticizable) medium offering almost infinite variability--the notion that there are places still to be “discovered” or at least seen from a different perspective appears to gain a new lease on life.

Jane and Michael Stern bring this home in “Two for the Road: Havana, North Dakota” (1997). The mention of North Dakota does not readily conjure up images of sought-after food experiences. But here, as one might put it, even the gustatory dimension of food is almost separated from its subtly de-familiarizing narrative properties. The Sterns tell the story of a restaurant, “The Farmer’s Inn,” located in the remote small town named in the title of the narrative: a “valued gathering place for locals and a farm food oasis for hungry travelers” (191). First opened in 1913 as the “Havana Café,” it closed in 1984, succumbing to decades of depopulation due to the decline of the local farming community. Realizing that a “restaurant in so remote a location had no chance of success if someone tried to operate it as a profit-making business, the members of the community decided to reopen the café on their own” (192). The story of the café frames itself within the much romanticized idea of a community gathering, one that could just as easily have occurred a century earlier. With customers helping themselves to coffee and “high school girls that get paid a \$10.00 honorarium per day” working as waitresses, “The Farmer’s Inn” is hardly a place to make a living. But of what fundamental interest is this to the discourse of gourmet travel, for which the experience of eating is effectively represented as retroactively transcending time and place? It is true that the social realities of food, usually reduced to the folkloric in *Endless Feasts*, are here given more than their usual share of attention. The clientele of the “Farmer’s Inn” travels sometimes huge distances,

less for the food itself than for the pleasant stimulation of a “small town café [...] so conducive to a relaxed exchange of news and opinions” and people say that the Inn “holds their community together” (192, 195). But for the Sterns, who are clearly enchanted and intrigued by the homespun, mildly retro, Norman Rockwell-ish Americana of the scene, the novelty of the “Farmer’s Inn” is not so much its communal, anti-commercial spirit but its marked contrast to the standardized, corporate anti-aesthetic of restaurant-industry giants such as McDonald’s, Starbuck’s and TGIF, purveyors of “American” food experiences. What is needed, for ideological, “dislocalizing” purposes here, is an “oasis” of cultural novelty and authenticity in the desert of standardized American food experience, even if the food itself does not taste all that different than it would elsewhere. Although the authors “pitch in” by providing recipes from the Farmer’s Inn, what *Endless Feasts* celebrates here is not the taste of the food but the “taste” of its American heartland location and its ethnographized, “communal” mode of preparation and consumption. In this instance of dislocalism, we are invited, so to speak, to imagine “eating” the restaurant itself.

The presence of so many narratives in *Endless Feasts* striving to keep up the search for traditional and culturally-authentic food in new ways—whether as novelty in the past or as a novelty searched for in the present-- is an attempt to hold onto the idea of national, regional, and local cuisine at a time when the concept of the gourmet itself, as defined by *Gourmet*, appears to require the impossibility of the former.

Fusion: Food & Wine

Unlike *Gourmet*, and its literary monumentalization in *Endless Feasts*, the widely read magazine *Food & Wine*, which began publication twenty-five years ago, appears to

care very little about the national identity-crisis of American gourmets. Its emphasis is clearly on combining ingredients and flavors from around the world without particular regard for national boundaries, the process now well-known to New Age gourmets and mass-consumers alike as “fusion.” Jeff Weinstein, a fine arts editor and a food columnist at *The Philadelphia Enquirer* in “The Art of Fusion” (published in *Food & Wine*’s September, 1998 issue) offers a standard definition of fusion as a cooking that “combines ingredients from dramatically dissimilar cuisines or cultures. Typically that means recipes in which Asian ingredients are used to shock French or American standards out of their complacency.” He goes on to say that more recently “fusion has gone further, incorporating ingredients and methods from the Middle East, the Caribbean and Central and South America into menus that, when they’re successful, begin to lose their national identity and become something like the diet for a culinary One World” (Food and Wine/ The Art of Fusion). But, according to Weinstein, fusion is actually more than the mixing of national cuisines since they too are in flux. “‘Fusion,’ he writes, “is a particular historical circumstance having to do with late-20th-century chefs and their urge to create” (Food and Wine/ The Art of Fusion). Fusion “dishes are usually variations (often wonderful variations) on standard themes—southwestern American, northern African, bistro French” (Food and Wine/ The Art of Fusion). Paying homage to premier chefs who espouse the concept of fusion, he credits Wolfgang Puck with being the first “postmodern” chef, whose restaurants “were the first to acknowledge that the world’s appetites have become nomadic, touristic, ready to throw any and all ingredients into a carry-on and take off” (Food and Wine/ The Art of Fusion). Presented as a jet-setting, touristic, adventuresome experience in which national traditions matter only for the

inspiration they provide to creative chefs (not just the celebrities but also home-based amateurs), Weinstein's version of fusion seems to need national boundaries only in order to dispense with them.

The possible hyperbole of Weinstein's paean aside, it seems clear that fusion reflects significantly changed American eating habits and an increased overall awareness of food and food traditions around the globe. Fusion cuisine, roughly the culinary equivalent of globalization (at least for those who are able to reap the latter's benefits as consumers), seems to be about the opening of national borders to global flavors in such a way as to render any sort of national identity based on food tradition much harder to narrate.

Food & Wine includes features on exotic ingredients that can be found in local grocery stores, articles on best restaurants, and recipes for the home-cook. It openly proclaims its mission to cater to the culinary tastes of the economic elite. And more significantly, it is published by American Express Inc., the company that, according to David Harvey, first popularized the term "globalization" in an advertisement for its credit cards.⁸ Thus, it seems only appropriate that American Express should sell a guide to the myriad of food and wine choices that are now available to elites—and not just in the U.S.—as a result of the "liberation" of markets from state control.

But is fusion simply, as its celebrants in venues such as *Food & Wine* claim for it, a culinary free-trader's "liberation" from the protected enclaves of national cuisines?

⁸ In *Spaces of Hope* (2001), Harvey explains that "'globalization' seems first to have acquired its prominence as American Express advertised the global reach of its credit card in the mid 1970s. The term spread like wildfire in the financial and business press, mainly as legitimation for deregulation of financial markets. It then helped make the diminution in state powers to regulate capital flows seem inevitable and became an extraordinary tool in disempowerment of national local working class movement... And by mid 1980s it helped create a heady atmosphere of entrepreneurial optimism around the theme of the liberation of markets from state control" (13).

Is it, in fact, the brave new food of the global citizen? Or might it, in ways far removed from the old-money penchants of *Gourmet* and *Endless Feasts*, be a food for a new kind of American national-imaginary?

The best clue to the nationalist fantasy mechanisms of fusion, I suggest, lies as it does in the case of *Endless Feasts*, in its connections to metaphors of mobility and displacement. For what fusion offers to the consumer looking for newness and variety in his or her daily consumption of food is not, as in *Gourmet*, the aperitif of traveling to exotic food destinations, but the pure fantasy of travel. The discerning diner no longer needs to go out into the world; the world itself now travels to his/her plate. Remembering our earlier stipulation about tourism as the industrialized, but also purely aestheticized form of travel, it might be said that *Food & Wine* fusion narratives present the domestic national space as something renewed and ripe for tourism. This is especially true of metropolitan centers such as New York and San Francisco, where one can eat one's way through endless combinations of food—say, for example, Japanese-Italian-French fused together in some form—without having to leave the U.S. And as for those who don't live in these areas, the recipes published in *Food & Wine* will help them achieve the same fantasy. Although the idea of actual travel and mobility is indeed important to *Food & Wine*, what it sells is a kind of ultimate world tour in which the destinations themselves have been detached from their spatial location, becoming fantasies in the form of pure flavors, smells and colors. As a guide to the sophisticated palate, *Food & Wine* has done the traveling for the consumer, and what we get is a diffused expertise of cooks, writers and advertisers that provides how-to knowledge for the magazine's elite and wealthy subscribers. The infusion of newness into food experiences requires nothing, in principle,

beyond the extension of free markets and trade routes into every corner of the culinary world, the knowledge (resulting partially from the exploits of the early food-travelers, now more widely disseminated than ever) of how to prepare and combine the imported culinary goods, and the money to buy them.

But I will show that, notwithstanding its fantasy-driven mobilization of culinary experiences without regard to borders, fusion cuisine, far from erasing the desire for narratives of food within nationalist paradigms, “dislocalizes” this desire in such a way as to re-assert food experience as “American.” It very well exemplifies Wallerstein’s argument that narratives of homogeneity are accompanied by narratives of newness and diversity. And it is precisely this newness that is claimed as “American.” Fusion food (to abbreviate and anticipate my argument below) works by leaving the domestic space formerly to be filled by a putative national cuisine empty and transferring the cultural identification power of cuisine from the food on the plate to the act, and the performance, of consuming it—from the eaten, to the eating.

Not all of this necessarily rests on fantasy. Fusion cuisine as displayed in *Food & Wine* reflects the recent American discovery of new foods that have helped to change American eating habits and to achieve new food goals, such as weight loss or the learning of new ways of preparing familiar ingredients. Fusion reflects an increased awareness of food and food cultures around the world, and it instructs Americans (especially, but not exclusively, the elite) not only in how to partake of elegant food but in how to perform refinement and elegance through food and wine choices, whether it be eating in a restaurant or preparing it at home. It has allowed Americans to take up food as a noble

pursuit and has helped in some respects to de-code food choices and cooking in terms of gender.

But fusion retains the form of dislocalism precisely by representing the empty space that comes to be saturated with global food as a domestic one. After all, even if one can eat anything, from anywhere, at any time, one cannot *do* this anywhere. Fusion is not something so much for, say, working class people or those who live in rural areas whether in the U.S. or elsewhere. As seems to be the case with most narratives of globalization, the real point from which one imagines the “one world” remains fixed, national, and—largely--the urban United States.

That is, unlike *Endless Feasts*, the fusion cuisine promoted by *Food & Wine* is not constrained to narrate the nation as one containing food experiences equivalent to those of other nations, but rather wants to maintain the gap so that the space is available for fusion to take place continuously, providing newness through pure fantasy. It is newness and not authenticity that *Food & Wine* wants to provide to its customers. The magazine is invested in maintaining an empty domestic space because it is precisely such emptiness that allows the flavors from outside the nation, whether they have been localized or not, to continue to infuse newness. Emptiness can only be filled with pure fantasy in order to inject newness into daily experiences. An American identity marked as a lack must be maintained so that fantasy about travel, other national traditions, and the mixing of new flavors can continuously re-aestheticize American food experiences as in themselves performances. For foods from other nations to serve as objects upon which to perform an American food identity, the stage itself must remain stationary and vacant. This performance is essentially that of consumption. Asian flavor and European sophistication

are not able to change the structure of American identity so long as participating in these food cultures remains an act of sheer consumption. Thus it is the structure of fantasy itself, not any particular fantasy over others, that permits *Food & Wine* to dislocalize, allowing all tastes, flavors, etc, to permeate food experiences without regard to borders, but at the same time reaffirming an American identity (effectively marked as upper class) as the only one that is perfectly open to these experiences.

Pursuit of Refinement

The pursuit of upper class refinement in dining experiences through borrowing from food traditions of other countries is not a new phenomenon. So, for example, Wolfgang Schivelbusch in *Tastes of Paradise* (1992) explains the medieval European penchant for Asian spices not as a consequence of the desire for new food preparation and preservation techniques but rather of the desire of “refined people” to imagine themselves differently through new flavors from an imagined “elsewhere.” “The aroma of spices was believed to be a breath wafted from Paradise over the human world. Medieval writers could not envision Paradise without the smell or taste of spices”(6). It was not until the 17th century that spices lost their supremacy, because they began to glut the market and thus became more commonplace. And “with the French leading the way, European cuisine had evolved to become very much like the one we know today, more moderate in its use of spices” (14). Similarly, in relationship to the U.S. elite, Harvey Levenstein writes as follows in *Revolution at the Table*: “By 1880, upper class Americans along with their British counterparts, had discovered the delights of fare more sophisticated than their national cuisine” (10). After the Civil War many more Americans became wealthy and “awash in wealth the new upper class inaugurated a new

‘Age of Elegance’” (10). Levenstein goes on to say that though the American culinary heritage may have been one of abundance, it had little in the way of elegance to offer, so Americans turned to Europe, in particular to the cuisine and manners of France. (10)

This tradition continues today, but in the form of fusion. For example, the July 2003 issue of *Food & Wine* features a report on “America’s best new chefs,” and declares Scott Tyser as one of them because he “takes culinary traditions from around the world—and from his native Texas—and makes them his own, using impeccable French technique” (136). But here instead of turning to France to copy its dining habits and manners, it is Tyser’s mixing of flavors and techniques—French ones prominent among them—that constitutes the pursuit of elegance. While Europe continues to inspire form, elegance and structure, *Food & Wine* persuades consumers to become attuned to newer flavors, such as those brought over by post-sixties immigrant populations, and to non-Euro-American cuisine in general. But since many of the food choices available from the various non-European traditions (such as Chinese, Thai, or Mexican) are too widely available and inexpensive to be considered elegant, *Food & Wine* moves away from localized ethnic cuisine into that of fusion, which has as much or more to do with the form in which food is presented as with the combination of flavors and ingredients.

In his classic sociological study *Distinction*, Pierre Bourdieu differentiates between the notion of taste as refinement and taste as a property of food, arguing that for the French class of *nouveaux riches*, whose habits he examined, taste as refinement occupies the center of the dining experience because only thus can such diners remove themselves from the “crude necessity of eating.” While the peasantry might also evolve a

style of eating distinct from “crude necessity” itself— hearty meals in large family groups at which one doesn’t necessarily pay attention to table manners—the *nouveau riche* stylize their eating so as to distance it as much as possible from the corporeal, cultivating light and non-fattening foods and tastes, such as fish.

Bourdieu’s account of “taste” as a class-marking food code in which eating and mere consumption are counter posed also describes to a degree American eating habits. *Food & Wine* encodes food differently for its American readers. The magazine does not so much strive to divert attention from the crude act of eating as it turns consumption itself, with eating as one of its subsets, into a form of art—even implying that consumption is a moral and ethical duty. Eating is here “refined”—rescued from its immediately physiological reality—by being integrated into a whole chain of consuming performances, including buying and consuming the products advertised in the magazine and even buying the magazine. American Express’ mission statement explicitly links consumption itself with refinement:

American Express Publishing’s mission to reach affluent consumers with publications that address their greatest passions is a natural extension of the 151 year-old American Express Company. Generations of people who have the means to indulge themselves with travel and good living have turned to American Express. Thirty years ago, American Express began providing these high-income consumers with some of America’s finest lifestyle publications, creating a tradition of affluent lifestyle marketing that continues to expand under American Express Publishing. (Amex Custom Publishing Company)

This seems, on the surface, to be strange mode of refinement, given how readily the act of consuming can carry a taint of unreflective decadence. In the American context, it is hard to resist the further equation of globalized consumption with global cultural

domination and imperialism. As with the “ugly American tourist,” the American consumer has come to possess an unflattering image. But underlying this image is the idea of consumption as sheer appetite, as non-discriminating. This, as I have shown in chapter three, is the stigma that pushes contemporary U.S. travel-writing to seek ever new and different ways to make travel out to be productive and value-creating, unlike the commodity that tourism is seen to have become. The American Express mission articulated above and in the pages of *Food & Wine*, however, does not evade consumption but rather seeks directly to generalize and repackage it as refinement. According to American Express Publishing, “*Food & Wine* delivers a perfect balance of travel, drinks and cooking —the lifestyle that defines today’s taste makers. Each page seduces readers with attitude and elegance, which turn aspiration into inspiration. With a circulation of nearly 900,000, *Food & Wine* reaches America’s most discriminating epicurean market” (Amex Custom Publishing Company). The emphasis on taste and elegance works not so much to divert attention from the perception of self-indulgent and exorbitant U.S. spending (in the form, say, of both rich, high calorie foods and weight-loss products, as set against widespread hunger and malnutrition in the world), as to “balance” the various objects of consumption, and, jettisoning an older, class-neutral construction of “America,” openly equate spending with cultivation: whence the barely disguised linguistic grotesquerie of a “discriminating, epicurean market.” Despite the fact that *Food & Wine* is a largely commercial endeavor on the part of American Express Inc, with over 100 pages of advertisement out of a total of 194, and with the recipes and articles on the remaining pages scarcely distinguishable themselves from forms of advertising, the magazine presents food experiences as something that nevertheless

bypass commercialism by packaging those marketed experiences in a “discriminating” and refined way and thus, ideally, providing them with cultural capital. Borrowing from others even when they look towards any one national food tradition, *Food & Wine*’s narratives are turned into *narratives of consumption* themselves, and more often that not delve into other national traditions only to be able to pick and choose from the ingredients and flavors already at the disposal of the consumer. Here again we see how the culinary lack at the center of the U.S. as a domestic space is turned to advantage by becoming the site of consumption as sheer performance—a performance of class that is at the same time essentially American.

Advertising Elegance and Fusion, Tradition and Fantasy

Dislocalism—a simultaneous flight to the global and investment in the local—is especially acute in the way *Food & Wine* (like many other kinds of specialty product magazines and shopping catalogues) does the work of turning consumption into refinement by blurring the lines to a considerable degree between feature articles, recipes, and paid commercial messages. For example, in the July 2003 issue, among over one hundred pages of advertisements we find an advertisement for Kikkoman Soy Sauce, a two page layout that contains a short narrative about the “versatile” nature of soy sauce as well as a photograph and a recipe for its use with steak. Feature articles follow this structure as well. Emphasis on consumption not only as the national pastime but as almost a moral and civic obligation, can be observed in a feature article in the July, 2003 issue of *Food & Wine*, “A Banner Day,” by Kate Krader. The article, about Fourth-of-July picnics and cook-outs, features suggestions from Los Angeles chefs Suzanne Goin and David Lentz, who describe the techniques and styles used in their restaurants.

Recipes are also provided for those wanting to recreate that experience for themselves.

The recipes themselves, however, go beyond a simple listing of ingredients and techniques. One of them, entitled “Lemony Halibut Skewers with Carmoula,” prefaces the list of ingredients as follows: “These skewers are based on one of Goin’s favorite dishes at her wine bar A.O.C.—grilled yellowtail with Meyer lemon and Carmoula, a cilantro-based Moroccan marinade and condiment traditionally served with fish” (168).

While the ingredients of this marinade have become very recognizable in some areas of domestic food experiences—cilantro, parsley, bay--the mention of its traditional Moroccan provenance seems at first to create a kind of dissonance. Moroccan (read, Arab and perhaps Islamic) flavors on the Fourth-of-July? Yet this is not a Moroccan dish but rather fusion, a tacitly American mode of consumption. Moreover, Morocco itself, a close American ally and standard and safe destination in travel and food tourism stories, is not Libya, Syria or Iraq. Morocco can be safely consumed on the fourth, and consumption, in turn, can be American and comfortably perform “Morocco.”

Furthermore, the mention that this dish is Goin’s favorite at her wine bar A.O.C. makes for a neat and patriotic plug for Goin as chef as well as for her wine bar. Highlighting the way in which the pages of many publications negotiate relationship with corporate sponsors, *Food & Wine* maintains consumption itself as the site of legitimated identity, refinement and style. Whether A.O.C. compensated *Food & Wine* for this plug, likely a matter of closed record, seems beside the point. It is clear, despite its minimalism, that this is not a narrative in which Moroccans are likely to be eating hot dogs on their own national holiday. It is fusion of the ingredients that go into making this dish, and the taste that they produce is the important factor in infusing newness (as opposed to changing

tradition) into the U.S. domestic space. Although taste in this sense does not free itself completely from the narrative of national tradition, it ceases to be merely synecdochic in its relation to the latter and acquires a degree of autonomy for the U.S. global consumer/reader of *Food & Wine*. In many ways fusion food creates an international context for consumption and dispenses with it for the all important act of consuming, an act which in its turn works as a space clearing gesture in which the domestic space remains marked as a lack.

To complement further what was evidently its annual “patriotic” issue, *Food & Wine* features an article by Peter Wells, “A Chef at Peace,” which tells the story of John Besh, a cook who had almost completed his diploma at the Culinary Institute of America when he was called up for the first Gulf War. Wells tell us how Besh kept a professional diary during the conflict that outlined menu items he wanted to create once the war was over. Born and raised in Louisiana before going to New York to attend CIA, at war Besh found his imagination more occupied by the local foods of Louisiana than by New York’s trendy-ethnic-nouvelle cuisine primarily because it became a way of remembering home while far away in Kuwait. Wells quotes him as follows: “I figured out it’s not all about what they’re doing in New York or Los Angeles.... It’s about learning what we had back in Louisiana. That woke me up—that I miss Mom and Dad, I miss the food, I miss all the things that gave me comfort” (78). While in the Gulf, Besh even drafted what he termed a “mission statement” for a hypothetical restaurant called the “New American” in which “everything down to the coffee, would be made in America” (78). “No longer,” Besh’s manifesto further states, “would America’s cuisine be looked down on by other nations. [...] It’s time for America’s cuisine to reflect its people and personality” (78).

With the second U.S. war on Iraq and a bloody and dangerous U.S. military occupation of the country underway in July, 2003, it certainly seems legitimate to read Wells' piece as a cautious and line-toeing "epicurean" salute to the flag. Here the fusion food narrative gives way to what also seems a more traditional culinary nationalism, in the manner of *Endless Feasts*. The familiar synecdochic relation—Louisiana's regional authenticity and originality *is* American cuisine—appears to be back in force. But, while reverting to a culinary nationalism resting on the eaten rather than the eating, "A Chef at Peace," more carefully considered, turns out to be the exception that proves the (fusion/consumption nationalist) rule. For this is not primarily a food-experience narrative at all. There are no descriptions of food here, or recipes, such that food itself becomes a screen upon which to project fantasies. It is a story about war in what is not only a literal but also a kind of food desert: Kuwait, Iraq, KP rations or otherwise militarily standardized food. Homesick fantasies about a "New American" restaurant/cuisine in which even the "coffee" (not something, by the way, that can be cultivated anywhere in the U.S., with the exception of Hawaii, for he does not specify whether the coffee bean, distributor, or style would be American) is home-grown are the predictable results when a food expert like Besh must be removed from the site of both cooking and consumption. Though towards the end of the article, Wells informs the reader that not every single ingredient in his restaurant is "American" (since national boundaries in relationship to food would be impossible to achieve), the article emphasizes his patriotism in stating that Besh "traveled all the way around the globe" and "discovered" his home. Now "a chef at peace"—presumably inner as well as outer—Besh, having found (in a "dislocal" fashion) his home away from it, can fulfill his dream

of getting back to his culinary roots without having to do battle with “foreign” ingredients and flavors.

As I argued at the beginning of this section, *Food & Wine*, together with its fusion food aesthetic, differs from earlier genres of food tourism narrative by transforming “travel” into its pure, fantasy form and incorporating the linguistic and visual markers of such fantasies directly into food descriptions, recipes and advertisements. But this does not mean that travel itself is missing entirely from the narrative culture of the magazine. Take, for example, “Jean-Georges’s Asian Accent,” a feature article by Jane Sigal. Sigal’s article is typical in most ways of *Food & Wine*’s feature stories. The layout of the first page of the story places the following sub-heading at the top of the page: “Having a meal at superchef Jean-Georges Vongerichten’s new restaurant 66 is like traveling to Shanghai without leaving New York City. An admirer attempts to eat her way to an understanding of his intensely personal cuisine” (149). This is positioned above a photograph of a white bowl of cabbage resting on a yellow base with green asparagus peeking out of the broth. With a black mat as background, the visual oozes contemporary design. The photographer’s name appears on the bottom right hand corner, emphasizing the artful dimension of the food photograph, here and throughout the pages of the magazine. A mere glance at the article, with its reference to fusion, Shanghai-in-New-York, a chef with a French name, and an international visual design flavor in which the taste of the food and “taste” in the sense of refinement and visual sophistication effectively merge, already tells the reader that travel to far flung lands is no longer necessary if American cuisine is to come of age and into its own. The world has now

beaten a path to America's door; there's nothing left to do but "discriminate"...and consume.

Yet Vongerichten's cuisine is connected to travel in at least two, non-imaginary senses. First, there are his restaurants. Sigal tells us that Vongerichten "grafts Asian flavors onto French techniques at both Jean Georges' in New York and at Vong, which has outposts in Hong Kong, Chicago and Manhattan" (150). These "outposts" in fact serve as perfect culinary examples of Saskia Sassen's thesis that the major city-centers in the world are economically linked with each other far more than with their own national economies. Still, though his food reaches beyond U.S. boundaries (he is opening a restaurant in Shanghai as well), the U.S., especially New York, is constructed as the vanguard of fusion cuisine, the place where the melding of different flavors finds its optimal space, as there is no strong, uniform domestic tradition to stand in its way. Travel here starts at the place where, fundamentally, travel is no longer necessary.

Yet there are still ways to infuse newness into the New York food scene. "After a few trips to Shanghai," reports Sigal, Vongerichten has reversed the direction of the graft and "started to bringing French ingredients into Asian dishes" (150). Evidently there are still invigorating things to be learned from travel and study outside the American metropolis. After dining at 66, Sigal has a number of questions for the super-chef: why, for example, does tuna tartar appear on a Chinese menu? Might the lacquered pork with scallions and ginger be a "nod to his roots in Alsace" rather than something discovered in, or inspired by Shanghai? Vongerichten's only reply to her is that she must to go to Shanghai and find the answers there. Further travel so to speak, into the heart of the menu must have the way prepared by travel across the globe.

Sigal complies. Upon reaching Shanghai, she writes that some of her “first impressions” were “expected,” but the city turns out to be far more “cosmopolitan” than she had imagined. There are still food experiences waiting to be discovered by the traveler. Adopting a quasi-ethnographic style, Sigal reports that “although the food was recognizably Chinese” she “had never seen most of the dishes before” (151). The menu at Bua Lao’s “is a thick manual on how to build your own harpsichord” and it “features a long list of cold marinated dishes, including smoked fish, bean-curd skin, jelly fish, drunken crab.... To partake of the latter, you “pick out the bits of shell and cartilage with chopsticks to get at the creamy roe and sweet flesh” (151). Such details may not be important to the people who go out to eat at 66 but the article specifically aims to provide information that will better enable them not only to know something about what they’re consuming but also to travel imaginatively from Shanghai back to the menu at 66. Sigal herself returns to 66 after her trip, where now, lo and behold, the lacquered pig reminds her of “China not of France” (177). She in fact realizes that Vongerichten is right, and the “trip to Shanghai had given [her] all the answers” (177).

Could anything be more cosmopolitan and less Americanizing than this story of food travel (or perhaps better said, food-travel-food)--complete with Vongerischten’s recipes and a section called “travel details” in which information about places to stay and eat in Shanghai are listed? Has not fusion here, in fact, truly become the food of the “global city”? It may appear so, but, though it is a subtle one, the fact remains here that international travel is no longer a means of discovering new or more authentic cuisines. It is in effect a mere appendage to a food experience complete in itself, or, at best, a means of deepening one’s interpretation, or embellishing one’s fantasy, of the tastes and

combinations on the domestically-located plate. And the place from which the taster interprets and further fantasizes is New York, not Shanghai, the place that lacks, and must therefore continuously be reinvested with meaning. Here food perfects its mediation of travel. Tourism can mean going or staying, so long as it takes the form of eating. Dislocalism functions regardless of whether travel is “real” or “fantastic.”

Such a domestic space of fusion also clearly requires that nothing stand as a barrier to the flow of goods/flavors, hence the “liberation” of all markets from state controls. This is especially acute in the case of China. In a “postmodern” version of *Endless Feasts*’ celebration of Shanghai—that is, one without the “weight” of history--Sigal attributes Shanghai cosmopolitanism to the presence of “foreigners—Japanese, Koreans, Taiwanese, Europeans and Americans.” She goes on to say that judging from the “billboards advertising everything” from KFC to “Thai-owned lotus supermarkets” the foreigners “are all here to do business” (150). Though the U.S. is presented as one of many foreign players in Shanghai, it is its presence, as, implicitly, the overseer and sponsor of globalization, as well as the principal market for Chinese exports, that makes the presence of the other “cosmopolitans” possible. And although the specter of an all out trade war with the Chinese is always hovering, China’s apparently high growth rates are one of the few remaining international economic indicators of the health and sustainability of U.S.-led globalization. And all of this, in Sigal’s as in the *Food & Wine* narrative generally, has its culinary analog: all tastes and ingredients come together into one, fusion melting-pot because the pot is American. China, once the evil, communist other par excellence, the barricaded and forbidden monolith, now, unlike the former

USSR, succeeds at business like a more youthful US, and, in any case, re-opens itself to the world like one giant and welcoming Chinese restaurant.⁹

In the next section I discuss food television network's series *A Cook's Tour* in part to show how an endlessly fused cuisine has sparked the search for even more extreme food experiences. Food programming on television has come a long way since the PBS-based instructional cooking of Julia Child and Jeff Smith; it need not provide recipes for dishes, and can function exclusively as a narrative.

The End(s) of Cuisine and *A Cook's Tour*

Dressed in a leather jacket and jeans, and radiating anti-institutional charm, Tony Bourdain, star of the Food Network series, *A Cook's Tour*, looks like he belongs in the beat generation. For him "eating is a way of life." He goes "in search of food around the world." A chef in the swanky New York Restaurant Les Halles, who started as a dishwasher in a Provincetown restaurant, the show constructs him as someone who has seen--and eaten--it all. Bourdain's cool is reinforced even further by the fact that he has written a number of books, some of them novels. His search for "extreme" cuisine mostly takes Bourdain outside the U.S., although he has done shows in New Orleans, Minneapolis and, most memorably, Los Angeles—where he eats in high end restaurants as well as in hot dog joints. He generally accompanies his eating tours with a sarcastic commentary on people who eat trendy food, on the moralism of vegetarians, and even on

⁹ An athletic analog to this same phenomenon can be cited as well: the recruitment by Houston's NBA franchise of Yao Ming, a Chinese basketball phenomenon over seven feet tall. This has as much to do with globalization as it does with winning games. Yao, as a mega-celebrity both in the U.S. and China, is clearly understood to be a possible gateway into China for companies that thereby hope to sell not only Apple computers, credit cards and Gatorade but also NBA paraphernalia to two billion Chinese. Of course, it is because Yao can play the game that he takes the court in Houston. The presence of international players in the NBA is now commonplace. But the game itself, more obviously than in the case of the space of culinary consumption, remains American.

the Food Network itself. No one, from the nouveaux riches to the poor, is exempt from his wit, something that provides him with credibility and helps him (as it does travel writers) to establish himself as an anti-institutional rebel and individual, separate from other tourists. The only thing that matters in the end is the food he eats. But this generates only the aesthetic effect of critique, and Bourdain's food commentaries, always presented within the frame of a tourism-narrative, are kept carefully apolitical. Or, more precisely, as one might otherwise put it, politics are always the politics of food as an aesthetic experience never, for example, a politics of food production or of hunger. Given this constraint, it is nevertheless explicit that Bourdain's search for extremes is a response to the abundance and wide availability of foods in a globalized U.S., albeit in endless combinations and suffused with flavors from all over the world. The U.S. is seen as a place over-saturated with food—an image reflected, positively and without the sarcasm, in magazines such as *Food & Wine*.

Holding out the possibility of some corner of the world of food experience that has not been discovered, *A Cook's Tour* sets out to find it. But these are not the national self-identity pilgrimages of *Endless Feasts*. Bourdain, by taking on the style and the persona of the fifties and sixties rebel, automatically conveys his contempt for this sort of culinary civic pride. No less than *Food & Wine*, *A Cook's Tour* starts out from the premise of a "national cuisine" as the space of a lack. And an American way of consumption as style and performance is, once again, the response, the mobilizing of the lack itself becoming the national identifying mark. But, unlike those of *Food & Wine*, Bourdain's food narratives relish the backdrop of consumption, turning the tour's destinations themselves into a kind of palate (as well as palette) upon which to

experiment with food. As Bourdain repeats in the standard series intro, featuring him at work in Les Halles (“this is my world”) overseeing the preparation of lamb chops, pepper steak, and a chocolate tart, even the wonderful worlds of fine eating and fusion leave a cook hungering for novelty, and so one must shock one’s taste buds, and sensibility, back into life. (“Taste and smells are my memories. Now I am in search of new ones. So I am leaving New York to have a few epiphanies around the world. I am looking for extremes in emotions, and I am willing to go to some lengths for it. I’ll risk everything. I’ve got nothing to lose.”) Not the lack of authentic domestic cuisine nor the ever more institutionalized routine and standardized menus of “ethnic” foods make Bourdain yearn to go in search of food extremes; rather it is the fact that eating, consumption itself, even when “fused,” becomes too satisfied with itself, too well fed, and too risk-free. The show presents the mobilization of the lack to be in danger of getting fat and sedentary if all it does is order from the menu and try faint-heartedly to stimulate itself at the price of the boredom and exploitation of the underpaid and usually immigrant kitchen crew. And so Bourdain, sporting a cigarette along with his jeans and leather, sets out to wrestle with his food, in a rebellious manner that is largely stylized, for he is often nervous about eating unfamiliar things.

In accordance with this defiant stance, his tours within the U.S. are more often than not mere spoofs. The opening of the LA show mocks Hollywood, and in New Orleans Bourdain misbehaves in typical French Quarter tourist style—or rather pretends to—getting himself arrested. His fine is to be taken out to eat some decent food. At the Mall of America in Minnesota he does a riff on standardization and corporatization, eating deep-fried cheesecake and jokingly insisting that scenes of *A Cook’s Tour*

supposedly filmed in Cambodia and Vietnam were actually simulations shot at the mall. True, he discovers that there are a few oases in Minneapolis, where he samples tripe prepared by a French/New York expatriate, enjoys locally made sausages in a neighborhood bistro, and finds good Vietnamese food, noting that in thirty years the latter will have become as American as apple pie. But one senses that these scenes were inserted at the Food Network's insistence, since they have nothing at all "extreme" about them. In effect, while touring the domestic scene (although significantly, not New York) he takes the performance of "taste" beyond "refinement" to its logical conclusion, purifying it of what are still its aristocratic, 'gourmand' pretensions even in the fusion aesthetic of *Food & Wine*. From the Cold War type democrats and food embassies of *Gourmet*, the yuppie shopping artists and fusing flavor collectors of *Food & Wine*—traveling to eat and eating as traveling—we arrive at the cook as bohemian and vagabond: eating travel.

Bourdain seems to become a culinary version of the travel narrators I have critiqued in chapter three. Like them, he borrows a form of ethnographic narrative that allows him to position himself against the average tourist, creating a sense of adventure, risk and danger. The back cover of the series' companion book (authored by Bourdain, and also entitled *A Cook's Tour*) states that it "chronicles the unpredictable adventures of America's boldest and bravest chef"—subtly taking it for granted that the bravery of a person has anything at all significant to do with his being a professional cook. All throughout Bourdain's adventures, both literary and televised, we are treated to nuggets of learning about the way that people eat. But since much of that is no longer so mysterious as it was even fifty years ago, Bourdain's ironic, undercutting narrative

becomes all the more important. And, indeed, Bourdain's witty mannerisms and clownish behavior are entertaining enough to become the real law of narrative motion in *A Cook's Tour*. In other words, more than watching the show to see what food he eats, we watch to see how he reacts to it. Indeed, Bourdain seems, at times, to grow bored with his "search," even, occasionally, almost angry with what the show's producers and director evidently force him to do—such as, for example, eating tamales laced with stewed iguana outside Oaxaca, Mexico. But it is clear that the series' own investment in looking for newness is so pronounced that the search for "extreme" cuisine must go on, even if the chef/hero has too much integrity not to ironize the whole affair for effect.

One way or the other, however, Bourdain produces narratives about national cuisines effectively in keeping with accepted wisdom about them, even if he pokes fun at them. While the series and (much more so) his books reveal him as someone critically aware, the food narrative itself works to dissipate and neutralize any criticism of institutions, government policy, or accepted stereotypes. In an episode of the TV show that takes him to St. Petersburg, Bourdain is taken to eat reindeer, which prompts him to say on camera that he may decide to serve it himself at Les Halles, for the Christmas season, just to terrorize children. ("Mommy, did he cook Rudolph? Yes, Timmy, he cooked Rudolph.") Though the opening of the show has Bourdain noting that as a child of the Cold War—from whose official, American version he clearly distances himself—he would never have imagined himself someday coming to Russia, he promptly dissipates even this incipient criticism by playing spy with his food "informant," Samir, with whom he communicates in secret code. As we watch Tony sampling reindeer, or blinis, or drinking himself into oblivion on the local vodka, the American viewer cannot help

summoning up media-circulated images of Russians whose food rations left them deprived during the Cold War. Presumably, no one ate well in the USSR. Only with the arrival of U.S. led global capitalism, with Bourdain following in its wake, did “Russia” come to qualify as a food experience. The reality—that there is more hunger in today’s Russia than twenty years ago under the Communists—is just too real, certainly for the Food Network, and even for Bourdain’s caustic, off-beat New Yorker’s skepticism. Even Bourdain’s complaints dissipate critique, as when he tells us that he gave in and wore a huge fur cap for the “Russia” show when he had specified “no funny hats.”

In *A Cook’s Tour*, Europe is largely reproduced as a purveyor of tradition and history. For example, on his visit to Portugal with José, his (Portuguese) boss from Les Halles, Bourdain sounds like any tourist guide as he tells us that “Portugal is a step back in time” and still “very much like it was 100-200 years ago.” His trip to France, where he had spent childhood summers with his father, is laced with nostalgia. With his brother, he eats the vichyssoise soup and oysters he says he remembers from years ago. But since he also cooks French brasserie food at Les Halles, the nostalgia for childhood summers still gives the familiar food something that, for Bourdain, food in the U.S. does not have. Here the spoofing is toned down, and as is generally the case when he is in Europe, Bourdain’s personal and professional familiarity with European cooking, ingredients, and habits put the “extremes” on the back burner.

For the world’s “extreme cuisine,” he must seek out the peasants and the poor in countries such as Cambodia, Thailand, Morocco and Mexico—according to Bourdain, the real food innovators, because driven by both tradition but also by scarcity and necessity. The critical force of the latter fact, though given more consideration in

Bourdain's writings, is muted on the series by a careful practice of always showing even the humblest people in these settings to be eating. "Extremes" pertain to taste, and to the personal quests for "epiphanies"—not to hunger and exploitation on the land.

Bourdain certainly makes no secret of his admiration for third world peasants, especially when they become immigrants to the U.S., bringing their culinary ingenuities with them. On the top of his list are the mostly Mexican sous-chefs who work for him in the kitchen at Les Halles, and one of whom acts as his guide on a food tour of Mexico. Here, of course, the specter of third world hunger can be more easily shooed away, even while its ironical benefits to cuisine in the U.S., by driving the world's best cooks to live and work there, are openly acknowledged. Here we find *A Cook's Tour* producing its particular variation on dislocalism: the lack is simultaneously filled and maintained by tracing the true culinary artistry of peasant innovators from their "extreme" locations at the "ends of the earth" back to the domestic enclosure of the U.S., where they can be fully aestheticized, but with a better conscience than what is on offer in *Gourmet* or *Food & Wine*. The only catch is that, because even this food will soon become "American as apple pie," the identity-producing lack can only be maintained if Bourdain continues to travel in search of still greater "extremes." Having become saturated not only with standardized food but with immigrant foods as well, what Bourdain must find in order to secure newness and "extremity" are the poor and immobile, those left out of the discourses on global cuisines, whom even Vongerichten's French/Chinese/New York/Shanghai fusions are too faint-hearted to discover. But note that by going in search of this food, Bourdain simultaneously appears all the more "American," while

Vongerichten, “66,” and writers for *Food & Wine* all look like “rootless cosmopolitans” by comparison.

As noted previously, the book, *A Cook's Tour*, contains critical comments evidently too dangerous for the television series. For example, Bourdain writes that “once you’ve been to Cambodia, you’ll never stop wanting to beat Henry Kissinger to death with your bare hands” (162). Calling Kissinger a “murderous scumbag,” Bourdain continues: “while Henry continues to eat nori rolls and remaki at A-list parties, Cambodia, the country he secretly and illegally bombed, invaded, undermined, and then threw to the dogs is still trying to raise itself up on its one leg” (162). We also hear that one in eight Cambodians—as many as 2 million people—were killed during Khmer Rouge’s campaign to eradicate their country’s history (162). With such comments rare anywhere in print in the U.S., much less in food narratives, Bourdain notes the “killing fields” of Cambodia as a tragedy prepared by U.S. carpet bombing of the Plain of Jars and the resulting threat of famine.

Still, even these critical and historical asides are kept within narrow bounds that tend, even in the more uncensored book version of *A Cook's Tour*, to dissipate their force. First there is the fact that they are delivered within the familiar format of an amateur ethnography, of going to see the “abject squalor” for oneself. Even if the critique is occasionally on target, this is a narrative strategy more concerned with warding off the stigma of tourism—i.e., with being “critical” of the “ugly American” on a package tour—than with questions of power and oppression. Even more crucially, however, this is still a narrative that, in the end, is about enjoying food, and nothing can be permitted to stand in the way of that. On this score, book and TV series are one.

A further barrier against critique—against the real “extremes” one finds on the peripheries of global capital—is simply the quality of Bourdain’s voice and mannerisms. Although he personally goes places and does things beyond the experience of the typical viewer, his on camera persona is clearly designed to make all this seem familiar to his audience. For example, when he eats a raw and still beating snake’s heart in Cambodia, the shock of the spectacle is guided back by Bourdain’s commentary into the standard U.S. “sense” of Cambodia as a place of violence and lawlessness. We hear him say that this is a place where tourists come to “behave badly,” thereby positioning himself both as a part of such bad behavior and yet outside of it—a fairly conventional ethnographic move in which the ethnographer gains close grounds yet somehow maintains a critical distance. Continuously striking the attitude of the rebel, Bourdain avoids the hotel lobbies and enlists the help of local translators and “informants” who show him around and take him to eat what the “people” eat, allowing him to maintain a simultaneously humble and cynical pose. In this same Cambodia show, we see Bourdain going down the Mekong river on a boat with another of his bosses at Les Halles, a Frenchman named Philippe. They see a poor woman cooking on a dismal looking houseboat and ask her if they can taste the food, all the while protesting that they don’t want to deprive her or her family of their sustenance. The woman seems doubtful a first, but, of course, consents, and the two of them are given generous helpings. Immediately, the focus is on the moment of tasting, and, despite the care taken by the pair of adventurer gourmets to show sensitivity to the poverty of their “informant,” the narrative of scarcity and hunger, with its strong ethical underpinnings, is instantly evaporated. Tasting, and the heaping of praise on the clearly overwhelmed and gratified boat woman, who smiles broadly, are

what conclude the narrative. Where did the woman get this food? What did she have to do to get it? Is this how she and her family eat everyday, or was this an unusual occasion? What will become of her? These are questions nervously set aside as Bourdain and Phillippe are boated away, congratulating themselves on a once-in-a-lifetime experience. And though in both book and TV show there is reference to the fact that the woman was washing her pans in dirty water, this only attempts to produce the stylized pose of Bourdain as a risk taker as he quips: "How do you say e-coli in French?" Though U.S. media projects images of the world's poor on a regular basis, what is produced here as "new" is the "fact," represented with an almost ethnographic detail, that these people do sometimes eat, and, even if they have little food, they certainly know what to do with it. It is as if good cookery could somehow always prevail and save the day, even in the absence of anything to eat. The idea is that there are gems in the dirt, starkly positioned against the nothingness of cuisine in the U.S., despite its abundance.

A scene in Bourdain's tour of Thailand in which he is shown eating a durian further typifies the series' theme of finding the good things amidst the rot of the world. The durian fruit emits an intense, rotting-like aroma but has a taste described as heavenly by those who eat it. A veritable forbidden fruit, it remains generally unknown and unavailable in the U.S. where it had once been illegal to import. Even in Thailand and other parts of tropical Asia eating durian is often prohibited in public places. Bourdain's ritualized eating of the durian—outdoors, but respectfully distant from the public—nicely condenses all the edges of his narrative strategy: food as novelty, as danger, as something stripped of the snobbery of Western gourmets, as a form of communion with the culinary genius of poor peasants, the good "rot" of the tropics positioned against the bad, tasteless

rot of junk and standardized food in the U.S. Though the book version of the episode contains more critical commentary, it also strips down the narrative into one of good taste amidst the muck. "It was fantastic," he reports. "Cheesy, fruity, rich, with a slightly smoky background. Imagine a mix of Camembert cheese, avocado, and smoked Gouda. Ok don't. [...] Tasting the stuff one struggles with words.... Durian was one of the first truly 'new' flavors I'd encountered." Note the rhetorical ploy of making a comparison to standard gourmet flavors and ingredients in the U.S., followed by the sudden, ironic abandonment of the trope ("OK don't.") as if to familiarize and de-familiarize in the same stroke. And we read that he sat there "licking the delightful gleet off my blade": an almost reassuring gesture amidst his nervous anxiety about sanitation of the food he is about to consume (170-1).

One of Bourdain's favorite targets of playful ridicule is the Food Network itself, which obviously is not threatened by any of it and sanctions it within the frame of this particular show. He is often shown taking pot shots at the big chefs of the Food Network: Emeril Lagasse, who gets probably more airtime than any other TV chef (about 2 and a half hours on a daily basis); or Bobby Flay who also has more than one show and gets daily airtime. In these comments, Bourdain presents them as not daring enough to go where he goes or to perhaps eat durian or a raw snake's heart. Back at the Mall of America we see Bourdain at one point observing a salesman demonstrate a mechanical vegetable chopper. He makes snide remarks about it, saying that with one of these he could fire most of his staff back at Les Halles, since the chopper is so efficient. He walks away muttering that he ought to get several as presents for Emeril, Bobby Flay, and

Martha Stewart.¹⁰ Of course one has to laugh. The regular viewer of *A Cook's Tour* knows that Bourdain appreciates and admires his kitchen staff, most of them Mexican immigrants. In a show referred to earlier, he travels with his sous-chef Eddie to the small town in Mexico where Eddie—and other cooks on his staff—came from and where many of their family members still live. The episode begins with Bourdain bantering with his staff: “I want your Mom, somebody’s Mom to cook for me.” And what the boss wants the boss gets, as a whole assembly of mothers and other family members turn out to produce a feast of delicious Mexican peasant fare for a grateful Bourdain. Now he realizes where his cooks learned their skills.

As with the incident on the river in Cambodia, Bourdain’s populist willingness to fly in the face of gourmet snobbery and rub elbows with his Mexican cooks and their families gestures at genuine social critique—evoking a Jack Kerouac-like narrative of a hip-plebeian American identity—only to dissolve it in the supposedly neutral ideological substance of good food, eaten in common. Spiced and flavored with Bourdain’s folksy and (within the limits of the occasion) gracious ways, the fact that neither Eddie nor the other cooks at Les Halles whose faces Bourdain recognizes in those of their mothers’ can afford either to bring their families with them to New York or visit them with any frequency back in their village in Mexico is not something the Food Network, for all its occasional munificence, is willing to have its viewers consume.

Once again, the book version sheds some critical light on what went on behind the scenes. It is here that we learn that the Food Network paid for the food at the feast in

¹⁰ The New Orleans episode shows him getting kicked outside of Emeril’s restaurant in New York implying that it was for the unkind remarks made about Emeril in his books—*The Kitchen Confidential* and *A Cook’s Tour*. *A Cook’s Tour* contains a section called full disclosure in which he says that he is uncomfortable at doing a Cook’s Tour Series and being associated with the food network because he has always made fun of the cooks associated with the food network.

honor of Bourdain's visit, the cost of which would otherwise have been prohibitive for Eddie's and the other sous-chefs' families. And Bourdain professes his own reluctance to join in with the staging. "I'd had a grim duty to perform. Yet another forced march to television entertainment. 'Tony... Tony... listen. It's a food show. It's going to be on the Food Network. We need some variety! We can't just show you hanging around in Puebla, getting drunk with your sous chef!' " (205). But the less-censored literary version of the narrative doesn't stray too far from the general, dislocalizing constraints of the food narrative as genre. The book tells in great detail the story of Eddie's beginnings as an undocumented worker in the U.S., but sweetens the sauce by emphasizing Eddie's success (legal, a good job in the kitchen at Les Halles) and pushing its exceptionalism off the table. Eddie, says Bourdain (something repeated on television), is his role model, and he feels privileged to know him. The Food Network gets lightly bashed for scripting the trip to Mexico and keeping Bourdain from simply relating to Eddie off the job and man-to-man. Still, Bourdain cannot resist letting slip another key ingredient of his affection for his sous chef here, and one more akin to his sarcastic remark about the virtues of the mechanical vegetable chopper at the Mall of America: he especially likes working with Eddie, and undocumented and immigrant workers from places like Mexico and Ecuador, because they are grateful for what little they have and will do what he says—unlike French or Italian chefs, who, he tells us in his book, have too many ideas of their own.

Eddie and the other sous chefs at Les Halles are, after all, the ones who have to continue reproducing Bourdain's recipes while he travels the world in search of extremes and epiphanies. His mobility is the antithesis of theirs. They move towards work, if they can find it. He moves away from it, tired of its alienating routine and its gradual sapping

of his culinary imagination. The peasant innovators he goes in search of, such as the boat woman in Cambodia, are, after all, just like Eddie's mother: those left behind in the great forced labor migrations of our time, so that their knowledge can find its way to the tables of Les Halles or 66 or the pages of *Food & Wine*, while their children chop the vegetables for a song, allowing the televised master chef, but not them, to travel and thereby appear to reverse the motion of the whole.

Conclusion

I have traced how food has become a site of tourism itself. Food is a form of the "exotic" that can be reproduced anywhere and is seemingly innocent of the excesses of tourism. Food tourism narratives in *Food & Wine*, *Gourmet*, and *A Cook's Tour* are even produced as "morally" better alternatives to "fast" or standardized food. While looking outside of national boundaries for food experiences in these narratives is framed with an almost moral "must-do" rhetoric of newness and adventure, eating the foods of immigrants in the U.S. is presented as an ethical duty. And I have shown that because the search for newer foods is presented as desirable and even moral, food tourism narrators must work toward maintaining the domestic space as marked with a lack of food experiences. Through complex dislocal strategies, such narrators not only champion a rhetoric of adventure but also maintain exacting boundaries between the U.S. and the rest of the world so that both are available to them as a space of creativity, pleasure, and new experiences.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

Persistence of Globalism: Future Conversations

Metaphors of mobility have come to define many aspects of the contemporary world. What I have attempted to show here is that those institutional and disciplinary practices that engage and define themselves in some way through such metaphors—but do so precisely as a way of preserving their traditional boundaries—become apt places from which to examine the discourse of globalization. Those who practice literary studies, among certain others in an array of institutions, find ourselves at an interesting moment: while we are aware of having to react to the processes of globalization, we can simultaneously contemplate our role in mediating theories of globalization without necessarily losing our own disciplinary identity. I have formulated the idea of dislocalism as a way to understand how historical processes require the re-articulation of disciplinary practices. But I have also attempted to analyze dislocalism as a concept that allows us to consider how we ourselves contribute to the discourse of globalization.

I have taken the reader through four separate instances of such dislocalism, but the concept can also help us understand other contemporary rhetorical strategies and how we make sense of and engage with “globalization” in different contexts. One such rhetorical strategy is that of the “turn toward fiction”—employing the concept of fiction as a literary genre and also as something in opposition to “fact.”

Though many literary/cultural critics continue to do important work in studying the processes of globalization, scrutinizing fictional strategies employed in the discourse of globalization can shed light on dislocalism in various institutional formations, including our own—with the potential to continue discussions about globalization in relationship to inter-disciplinarity, institutionalization, literary/cultural genres, politics, economics, technology. The examples of the turn to fiction that I discuss in management theory, travel writing and food-tourism narratives are only a few among many that employ this dislocal strategy. Examination of this strategy alone would reveal much about the way we grapple with changing conditions.

One could argue that it is not so much the turn to fiction per se, since the discourses or the “rhetorical strategies,” say, of nationhood have always involved a degree of fictionalization. The role or place of fictionalization in the dislocalisms I analyze, however, does appear to have changed in peculiar ways. Fictions seem to become increasingly embedded in “real” acts and performances. In the case of the travel narratives of Kaplan and Morris the reality of travel must ultimately be reaffirmed through changes to the narrative form and content of travel writing itself, something that is more pronounced in the case of Theroux’s *Hotel Honolulu*, in which a real experience, “travel” to Hawaii, becomes the basis for a seemingly traditional literary fiction because the “reality” of this experience, as “travel,” is harder to sustain in a globalized tourist industry that has occupied the very real space previously reserved for travelers. *Gourmet* magazine’s travel narratives can still regard themselves as adequate to the task of inventing a U.S. national/regional cuisine, but with *Food & Wine*, and the entrance of

“fusion,” the fiction again shifts away from its quasi-literary basis and invades the “reality” of recipes, food descriptions, menus and advertisements.

The increasing shift in mass media narratives towards “reality” (as in “reality TV”) can in some ways be seen as just such a “dislocal” attempt to hold onto the fictional. Take for example, the popular show *Survivor* that plays out “real” scenarios but nevertheless creates rules and settings that are effectively fictional in a sense different from a literary genre or the opposition to something factual. Rather, in the case of *Survivor* and reality TV “real” people do “real” things in “real” places; fiction enters in the form of script: the rules of the game, the staging of the “real” events, as well as in the mode of presenting the real events themselves to an audience. Instead of producing travel writing about the South Pacific or reading literary fictions about Americans in the South Pacific, real people participate in a kind of a high stakes parlor game on a real island in the South Pacific. The rules for “surviving” in remote parts of Australia, Thailand, and the Marquesas are not self-evident rules for real survival but those concocted by the show’s writers, producers and directors. The show dislocalizes with a renewed investment in fictionality by suggesting that there remain remote and “untouched” places in the world, even if “Survivor” has to create them. These constructed sets designed as a way for the audience to see and imagine the nations in which this survival game unfolds mark the show with a false dichotomy between tradition and modernity. Placing “modern” Americans who work as account executives, marketing coordinators, and financial consultants into seemingly “traditional” settings, the show exhibits an investment in maintaining the distance between the U.S. and the rest

of the world while at the same time enacting American ideologies that accompany the search for the remotest outposts for profitable ventures.

The CBS network Survivor Website on the Marquesan show, (<http://www.cbs.com/primetime/survivor4/marquesas/marquesas.php>) contains an introduction to the islands that richly betrays this dislocalism. Clicking on the link we see a globe spin out. It stops and lines appear dividing it into quadrants that mark, respectively, the locations of Sidney, Tokyo, Los Angeles and Tahiti. The lens zooms in on Tahiti then zooms out, marking the distance with a line between Tahiti and Nuku Hiva (the Marquesas site) where the show's members, referred to as the tribal council, play the game. Decorated with pictures of "traditional" looking trinkets and with music that we hear (complete with a CBS survivor store, <http://store.cbs.com/survivor4/index.php>, where people can buy island attire) dislocalizes by creating a sense of old-style adventure and invoking the rhetoric of the "survival of fittest" in its terminology that are also part of the insignia of the show itself: "outwit," "outplay," "outlast."

The *Survivor* rule whereby one person wins big at the end and the losers receive nothing (hardly a tribal mentality, despite the tribalistic hype) is common to other "reality" game shows such as *Who Wants to be a Millionaire* and *Joe Millionaire*. These and many other similar programs might be thought of as "verdict" shows, to be watched largely for the spectacle of "real" winning and losing. In this sense, too, might not these shows, in which the vast amount of money (usually upwards of a million) separating the one winner from the many losers serves not only as abject ideological legitimations of the widening gap between rich and poor (in "reality," after all, it's a question of "survival of the fittest" or mere luck) but also as virtual miniature portraits of dislocalism? By

placing the “real” American “players” on remote “real” locations instead of in television studios (to the extent that is, that “Survivor” locations are not precisely turned into television studios) the old fiction of an “American dream,” under pressure from intensifying social inequalities is, perhaps, successfully re-narrativized.

The concept of dislocalism can also shed new light on the complex ways in which the investment in nationalist paradigms is continuously being re-negotiated. Shoring up the borders of national identity has always been a difficult task, and has always required fictional/narrative mediation. But even “nature” exerts uncanny pressures on this process, as can be seen currently in the spread of new diseases such as AIDS and SARS and in the global scope of environmental damage. By promoting the fiction that AIDS is an “African” disease and SARS an “Asian” one, however, the currently hegemonic narrative of “America” declares a sort of symbolic quarantine against African and Asian immigrants—and helps legitimize decisions to limit or cut funding for medical research. As “nature” crosses borders, new borders must be thrown up around it as well

The consolidation of national boundaries in the face of globalizing capital has become an even more pronounced dilemma in the post-9/11 era, leading both to open warfare and to drastic new curbs on immigration. Even expressions of national loyalty are now steeped in dislocalism, providing another effective place from which to explore how the rhetoric of globalization is turned on and off in accordance with the immense contradictions of the current moment. How does the rhetoric of immigration, a major ingredient in the self-definition of the U.S., at the same time become a threat in the form a global force? How does the U.S.-led global projection of finance capital accompanied by the rhetoric of globalization and “one world” accommodate the U.S. military presence

in the Middle East and other places around the world, while simultaneously generating a rhetoric of consolidating U.S. borders?

Though loyalty to any one national formation has long been complicated by the rearrangement of national boundaries, (im)migration and other factors, at this time the economic pressures on the exhibition of national loyalty are far more pronounced and vexed. The recent move in the U.S. to boycott French products and companies such as Danon Yogurt, Air France and B.F. Goodrich in order to show “solidarity” with the U.S. war against Iraq aptly demonstrates the exceedingly complex ways in which nationalist paradigms operate in the larger economic realm. One might examine directly the narrative strategies operant in this sort of dislocalism, given the blatant fact that those who own “French” businesses, and who produce and distribute “French” products are often not French at all, and include many Americans among them who would be hurt by any boycotting effort. Boycotting any one nation’s products has effectively become impossible in this interlinked economy. But the dislocalism here consists in the fact that it is this very impossibility that exacerbates a militaristic form of nationalism, demanding loyalty to only one nation. The rhetoric that equates national unity with the ethical duty of the citizens to consume through tax cuts and the lowering of interest rates can also be understood as essentially an attempt to reaffirm economic borders in the midst of a deepening economic crisis on a global scale. But neither American consumption nor military power can provide a corrective in the long run, and thus the dislocal rhetorical performance of nationhood, whether militaristic or consumerist, would seem destined to take on more and more the aspects of a fiction. The paradigm here is fictional capital itself. Real economic acts (buying and selling, borrowing and lending money) are

performed, but acts whose rationality, and in a sense whose reality is based on a fiction, that is, on the supposition that real future production and valorization of fictional capital will make the fiction real.

I then conclude this project by envisioning a study that would give greater consideration to the turn toward fiction in both the flight to the global and the (re)investment in the local. In addition, I envision further examining the role of (inter)disciplinary practices as sites of dislocalism as the sharpening tensions between globalization and increasingly desperate retreats into nationalist paradigms further undermine and reify but also transform the work that we do.

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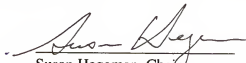
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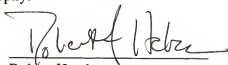
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Sarika Chandra earned a BA in English from Bentley College. She holds an MBA in Management from Bentley College, an MA in English from Northeastern University, and a PhD in English from University of Florida.


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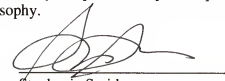
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